

WHEN I SAY NO,
I FEEL GUILTY

HERE BE DRAGONS

The
Psychological Problem:
Cause & Cure

Modernizing Talk Psychotherapy
For Both The Self Help
And Professional Modes
Using The **Here Be Dragons**
Coping Model
And Verbal Behavioral Methods



Manuel J. Smith, Ph.D.

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Cause & Cure

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Cause And Cure**

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And Verbal Behavioral Methods**

By

Manuel J. Smith, Ph.D.

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Frontispiece

To every thing there is a season, and a
time to every purpose under the heavens:

A time to be born, and a time to die;
A time to plant, and a time to reap;
A time to kill, and a time to heal;
A time to break down, and a time to build;
A time to weep, and a time to laugh;
A time to mourn, and a time to dance;
A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather;
A time to join, and a time to be far away;
A time to seek, and a time to lose;
A time to keep, and a time to cast away;
A time to rend; and a time to sew;
A time to keep silent, and a time to speak;
A time to love, and a time to hate;
A time of war, and a time of peace;

Ecclesiastes 3
Solomon

Also by Manuel Smith

WHEN I SAY NO, I FEEL GUILTY

Volume I

(for Everyone)

WHEN I SAY NO, I FEEL GUILTY

Volume II

(for Managers and Executives)

KICKING THE FEAR HABIT

YES I CAN SAY NO

(for school kids and adolescents)

Y88

Again, to Mankind,
the most important animal species,
and its following members

Claire
Chase
Dennis
Diane
Don
Ellen
Hal
Irv
Jennie
JoAnn
Joe
Joyce
Katie
Kelli
Matt
Nicki
Phil
Rich
Richard
Rylie
Sam
Scott
Sharon
Simon
Sue
Terry
Tom
Zack
Zev

Preface

I've worked on the comprehensive system of human function and behavior presented in this book for over twenty-five years. Its substance — what it is about — eluded me like a fish in deep water. I knew it was there and significant. But I could not define its shifting outline to anyone — even myself. It took much thought and writing, and then a lot more rethinking. I gave up many times only to come back because the material is compelling — it demands to be explained. I was in supposedly known, but largely unexplored waters.

Talk psychotherapy you see, is an area not very effectively explored by scientists, and clinicians themselves have not done much better. Most talk psychotherapists resemble misplaced English majors who, failing to find scarce jobs teaching Literature, pick a field similar from whence they came. Freud, himself, was nominated and seriously considered for a Nobel Prize — in Literature. I myself, come from a different, less literary cultural orientation — from a line of Irish Politicians on one side and the other, a three hundred year history of Norwegian Whalers. Where else, one might ask, would unemployed Vikings look for work, no longer given license to raid, sack, pillage, loot, and raze the known world?

Two incidents in this book's development are worth noting. The first happened fifteen years ago about three o'clock in the morning. I couldn't sleep. Getting up, I sat at the kitchen table sipping coffee. Without warning, I saw panned in front of me the whole relationship between education, indoctrination, brainwashing on a continuum of environmental restriction-expansion. That kept me on the hunt for the grand fish I was seeking for a long time.

But the project was still a hopeless mess until Marion Jacobs, my colleague who taught Business Assertiveness courses with me, asked if I wanted to attend a "skull" session along with her and some others at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel set up by Gail Sheehy, author of *Passages*. Ms. Sheehy wanted to write an article on famous psychologists and their ideas. She wanted some reaction from current psychologists about those in the past, from Sigmund Freud to B. F. Skinner. Over some very fancy Gorgonzola on crackers the shrinks tossed back and forth reminiscences of what Ivy League faculty wives of that era had said sarcastically, but posthumously of Fred Skinner's claims in his autobiography to be a great lover, as well as comments on Freud's fallibility as a scientist.

Apparently, in reading Freud they had never bothered to count. Freud was a master clinician and writer, not a scientist. He saw only sixty-five patients in his entire analytical career, and published on only eleven of them. Yet with that small amount of data he founded a world wide movement in clinical psychology and psychiatry. Most people, even the highly educated, do not realize that Freud's formalization of talk psychotherapy created a model of the structure of the psychological disorder — the internal animal *Id* in conflict with the *Superego* (the civilized conscience) that resembles the pre-existing Medieval model of the time of the cause of the psychological disorder, and for dealing with it — demons and their exorcism by the Catholic Church. Traditional talk psychotherapy still today follows the basic Freudian ideas derived from such Medieval notions of a psychological problem and its treatment, minus the religious trimmings. Its system and practice has not, in significant degree, been modernized or updated from those ideas set down by Freud a hundred years ago. Although we use sophisticated terms and language in its description, traditional talk psychotherapy is still a Medieval science based upon unchanged Medieval ideas.

Despite the shrinks' negative assessment of Freud — even though their own livelihood was derived from his work — I was especially interested in their opinion on Anna "O's" conversion hysteria paralysis (Freud's most famous patient.) I had spent most of that week working on analysis of her problem. Marion then reminded me and the rest of the round-table of the last known occurrences of conversion hysteria paralysis occurring some twenty years previously in Appalachia to West Virginia coal miners trapped in a cave-in. At that point I was deaf to the talk around me. In my mind's eye I again saw a revelation panned before me; the parallel and connection between the problems of Anna "O" and the Appalachian coal miners, in spite of one being about sex and the other dying. My mind kept running back and forth over the connection, analyzing — dissecting it. I saw the great fish running deep.

I didn't join the rest of the discussion. I kept stuffing Gorgonzola and crackers in my mouth as an excuse. I kept quiet thinking about Freud and Anna "O," busily writing in my head what I had just seen. Since then I have been able to focus on my elusive deep water fish and it has taken on shape and meaning. It is a very big fish, unrecognized by most, seen as something else before by many, and misunderstood by all.

As a result of those insights, this book makes some important, new statements about how our lives are structured, shaped and regulated.

How we perceive, what we believe, how we get into psychological troubles, even what those troubles really are, and how it is much simpler to resolve them, by ourselves or through psychotherapy, than we before have been led to believe.

Unfortunately, most popular psychology books are written to make money by telling people what they want to hear, or are just plain rubbish — remember those displaced English Lit majors? Therefore, to have some confidence in what you read here, as well as give you some background for evaluating these important, new statements, it may be worth your while to quickly scan, here and now, before you get into the book proper, the precursors and genesis of these statements. That's what this preface section is for. Briefly, the best evaluator of what this Irish son of Viking Whalers has hauled up on deck — besides examining the fish itself — is to answer the question; "What kind of fish has he pulled from the deeps in the past?" So let's look at what exploring uncharted waters has produced before this.

After *When I Say No, I Feel Guilty* was published, I was brought up on ethics charges by Freudian therapists for publishing the material in it. Without having read it, they couldn't — or wouldn't — believe what was said in and about *Guilty* was factual and accurate. The ethics committee asked them to read what was in *Guilty*, try it out and see if it worked. After that, ethics charges were never mentioned again. I saw this psychoanalytic reaction to my work as a feared rejection of the unknown identical to the warning the medieval cartographer put on his map of unexplored, uncharted waters — *Here be Dragons*. Roughly interpreted, that famous caution meant *Terra et Mare Incognita* — unknown land and sea pictured by a winged serpent signifying, *Here be something unknown and threatening to fear*. This is a common, primitive, animalistic fight or flight coping response when a psychological problem is caused, as I had for the psychoanalysts, with *Guilty* casting severe doubt upon their fundamental way of doing things. This primitive coping is not far removed from what our animal ancestors did when threatened. We still copy them by doing or saying anything to discredit or make disappear the cause of the threat — Remove The Dragon, or Remove Yourself from the Dragon.

This *Here Be Dragons* coping model, incidentally, is a most useful learning device for recognizing a host of maladaptive "fight or flight," primitive physical and psychological coping variations and differentiating them from the more effective coping of the psychological adult, and therefore, used throughout this book as an aid in learning.

Ironically, a few years later, and after the experiences of several million readers, *Guilty* was reviewed in *Psychology Today* because of its rapid, guilt extinguishing effect upon those who put its methods into practice. It was credited therein with prompting traditional psychoanalytic therapy to modify classical Freudian theory, which had postulated internalized guilt as set up in childhood and therefore irrevocable. Freudian therapy was correct in its observation about guilt's longevity, but for the wrong theoretical reason. Guilt is simply an abstract conditioned anxiety response that does not change just by passage of time. It can be viewed as an abstract phobia, much like a phobia about concrete things such as elevators and airplanes, etc., and can be unlearned, just as a phobia can be unlearned. As a result, psychoanalytic therapy then adopted a mother-child orientation theory of Object Relations to capitalize on the currently observed Mother-Daughter psychological problems in child rearing, but still kept its basic therapeutic assumptions on what could be done and what not.

Guilty was also credited, in large part, at American Psychology Association meetings, for the 1970's emergence of the Assertiveness Training movement, called by the APA president, as one of only six, beneficial developments produced by psychology for use by the general public in the past 100 years. In addition, *Guilty* was also succinctly summed up and evaluated by members of the National Academy of Sciences in their meetings with the self-critical query, "Why hasn't one of our boys investigated this area and developed such a training system?" That comment can be interpreted either as the members of the National Academy having internal problems to grumble about, or as one of the rare times they have been caught unawares by science proceeding without them.

At last count, *Guilty* has inspired over a hundred-seventy imitations on assertiveness. Most recently *Publisher's Weekly*, the chronicle of the publishing industry, reviewed a sample of the imitators with, "Readers who want a thorough grounding in assertiveness techniques would benefit more from classics like *When I Say No, I Feel Guilty*, instead of this hodgepodge of excuses."

In purely objective terms, *Guilty* has sold close to five million copies in fifteen languages since publication, was on all the bestseller hard and soft cover lists, and was # 1 in college bookstore sales nationally for the first three years of its publication. In stark contrast to this data and assessments of the worth and meaningful impact of *Guilty*, the aforementioned psychoanalytic "unethical" rejection can reasonably be assessed as

panicky, medieval guild, "Rice Bowl" economic fear expressed as *Here Be Dragons* coping, rather than professional, objective evaluation.

Kicking The Fear Habit was published on the Orienting Reflex treatment of anxiety and phobias, presenting original theory and methods for radically and rapidly eliminating phobias and anxiety, sometimes in less than 20 minutes of therapy time. Prior to this, even behavioral methods took six months to recondition and eliminate a phobia. As one might guess, some clinicians who made their living from regularly treating phobias were very upset with its publication. "*Kicking*" and I were accused of unethically misleading their clients, or potential clients — those undergoing therapy for many months, some for years — to believe their problems could be resolved in simpler, quicker, and more inexpensive ways. A decade after "*Kicking*" was published the "Alphabet Soup" therapies such as EMDR, TFT, TAB, and CIF etc., were developed as revolutionary treatments for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Each of these very successful and radical methods used treatment techniques that evoked Orienting Reflexes which overcame the anxiety results of trauma, such as combat stress, rape, physical abuse, accident, etc. in as little as 90 minutes. To date, over 20,000 therapists have been trained in "Alphabet Soup" therapies based upon the Orienting Reflex. Again, given the objective evidence of thousands of therapists using its principles, "*Kicking's*" critics' "unethical" complaint can also be reasonably assumed as the same type of medieval guild, economic fear expressed in primitive, *Here Be Dragons* coping about their clinical practices. Unfortunately, they too saw themselves as only having the primitive choices of Remove The Dragon or Remove Yourself from the Dragon.

Seven years after the publication of *Guilty*, the Irvine Unified School District in Southern California adapted its material into a middle school program for students that resulted in a 66% reduction in substance abuse, along with a significant reduction in school absences, inappropriate academic as well as premature sexual behaviors, and a half point grade average increase during their high school years, compared to untrained control students. Since its evaluation, that program has been adopted by school districts across California and nationwide. Its successful application in school anti-drug and alcohol training programs has paralleled the nationwide use of the material from *Guilty* in adult clinical programs as part of the psychological treatment of choice for alcoholics and drug abusers. *Yes, I Can Say No*, details the Irvine adolescent program.

Within a year after publication, the material in *Guilty* was also

adapted for use by business managers in dealing with on the job social conflict by the UCLA Business and Management Extension Program. For a decade, Systematic Assertive Management (SAT), was UCLA Extension's most highly rated and financially successful course. After its first year at UCLA, the course was offered by the American Management Association using a teacher I had personally trained. During its first year, his SAT course generated over a million dollars in fees. Since then assertive management has been offered in the training system of every English speaking country in the world. *When I Say No, I Feel Guilty, Volume II, for Managers and Executives*, details the UCLA course on Systematic Assertive Management, as well as that still offered by the American Management Association.

Because of these results of fishing in unexplored, uncharted waters where others feared dragons be, I was asked to present the 1999 Annual Distinguished Alumnus Lecture in Psychology at UCLA.

Given this background — its precursor's well received clinical development and wide application to a number of significant problem areas in human life, one does not have to be a Rocket Scientist to see the likelihood of the schematic in the present book to help people. One can also foresee, sadly, from observed past provincial, guild like behavior of protecting one's own clinical ox from being gored, this book will be criticized — and resented — on the basis of economic fears it will justifiably diminish participation in unnecessary long term talk psychotherapy. It will cause psychological problems for many traditional psychotherapists. This type of anxiety-avoidance, *Here Be Dragons* coping, so to speak, is, ironically, a significant part of the development of the psychological problem described herein. More optimistically, clinicians who are certain of their professional competence in learning new methods to help their clients will welcome the schematic given here as long overdue.

Even more sadly, the ideas in this book are very likely to be resented by some long term therapy clients — some of whom, who have already reacted negatively to the ideas and concepts given herein, are quite intelligent with an intellectual bent. These clients, I assume, do not want to face the unpleasant fact that their long years spent in traditional psychotherapy could have been shortened dramatically and made significantly simpler for them without so much squandered time and personal cost. Indeed, it is unfortunate this great fish found in uncharted waters, captured, tamed and put to work enhancing our well being will be rejected by those who see it as causing yet another psychological problem for

them, even though a minor, embarrassing one. As the chapters to come unfold, you will see this avoidance reaction as part of the basic, maladaptive, primitive coping of the human species; restricting one's environment by blocking out problematic stimuli that trigger off personal negatives and faults we dread. In brief, the Medieval *Here Be Dragons* coping reaction model of humans is a key part of the basic psychological problem — a denial-avoidance-withdrawal response to abstract personal negatives that are threatening and emotionally charged.

Here be Dragons The Psychological Problem, Cause And Cure presents a radical premise and method for dealing with the fundamental problem talk psychotherapy clients bring into the psychology clinic. No matter what the circumstance surrounding it, the psychological problem is always an abstract anxiety-phobic reaction in disguise concerning self worth and psychological/physical withdrawal from the problem environment. The psychological problem is broken down herein, into its five recognizable, sequential parts, along with a description of the five types of psychological problems we can all develop, as well as the simple, straightforward, and rapid diagnosis and verbal behavioral treatment for them.

In a nutshell, this book places the psychological problem, its development and treatment in context, i.e., the relevance of the Environmental Law of Behavior — the cause of the psychological problem — to falling in love, heartbreak, indoctrination, brainwashing, political correctness, acculturation, cultism, training and education as well as to the merging of behavioral and talk psychotherapy for simple, rapid verbal treatment in terms of hours rather than months or years. All this, the result of exploring in supposedly known, but uncharted waters historically avoided because *Here Be Dragons*. Come, join me in exploring them again.

Acknowledgments

The material in this manuscript is taken primarily from the work done in teaching thousands of people how to rid themselves of emotional reaction to personal and environmental negatives both in dealing with psychological problems in learning to become assertive as well as in individual and group psychotherapy. I thank them for giving me the opportunity to tell others of their stories and successes.

Very special thanks are due Harold S. Kant, M.S., J.D., of Reno, Nevada, for his support, critique, ideas and advice over the years, as well as the many hours of work he put in on this particular project.

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I especially appreciate Richard Cando's work in designing the cover. Many thanks to Jennifer Patten Smith for her unflagging support; and to Sharon Tyler Wunder for her patience in putting up with me on the job as this was written.

As always, I have to thank that Literary Drill Sergeant, Joyce Engleson, Senior Editor-in-Chief (Ret.), formerly of Dial, Doubleday, Dutton, etc., whose splendid knowledge, advice and counsel, even on this project, is apt, astute, concise, wise and witty. No author should be without a friend like her.

Thank you all

M. J. S.

Written while in residence at
Mandeville Canyon, Los Angeles,
La Playa, San Diego

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Chapter One

Simple Or Fancy, Serious Or Silly, Benign Or Deadly We All Have Psychological Problems.

Man is the only animal who can blush — or needs to
Mark Twain

In 1950 I was a student at Roosevelt High in Hawaii. I liked school there; probably because the 50's girls at school looked very nice. At least I thought they looked nice. Even if I also thought it strange that they all looked nice in the same way; like clones of one another. They all wore the same flared skirts, scoop necked, white peasant blouses, bobby sox and saddle shoes. They all cradled their books in their arms in the way you would hold an infant. Maybe they were practicing to be mothers — or child care workers. In all fairness, the boys weren't any different. In retrospect, they looked as if they came out of a 3D Xerox machine each morning wearing the same outfit. They wore colorful shirts, pegged denim blue levis with a gray cuff made from a razor thin fold at the bottom of each pant leg, and black leather half boots. We conformed so much it looked as if we were wearing a school uniform. In ranks of four, we would have looked like an army. All except for one fellow. He wore whatever he wanted; usually topped by a black leather motorcycle jacket with shiny metal studs. I always thought of him as a rebel. He was my friend, sort of. He was eighteen and I was fifteen. That meant he tolerated me when I was near. Why did I and other callow youth hang around him? Back in 1950 there were no sex education classes. No one ever spoke on sex openly. If you did, and insisted that you had a constitutional right under the first amendment to do so, you were simply arrested and sent to a mental institution because, ipso facto, the facts spoke for themselves then; you had to be nuts to do that. So we hung around Rebel because he knew more than we did about sex and girls.

One spring day, I was with him in the school courtyard on morning break and he taught me something on girls and sex, or so it first seemed.

Actually, he only further confused an already vague viewpoint. He and I, mostly he, were chatting with a group of six teenyboppers. They acted as if he was the greatest thing since sliced bread, smiling and simpering at everything he said or did. Especially when he reached over to the cutest one, snapped her scoop necked blouse forward with one finger, looked down inside, and said "I see your shoes are shined." That really broke them up. They were giggling and laughing as if Laurel and Hardy had just met Godzilla.

I thought that amazing. I had believed that girls — decent, middle class girls such as these — were not interested in sex and would only take part because of love, a desire for babies, and Mother Nature's dictate to propagate the species. I don't really know where I got that particular belief. I think it was part of the general culture then. But I had just been given a demonstration that what I believed applied to middle class girls was not so. So I tried the same "I see your shoes are shined" ploy that same day on a group of girls I knew. They were outraged. They went off in an indignant huff and never spoke to me again. So which was right? What I had just seen demonstrated that not only were girls interested in sex, but they took delight in it? Or my original belief that middle class girls were not interested in things sexual?

At that point I had a real problem. In fact, I had a psychological problem. As you see it was a minor one, even one we can chuckle at. But it still was a psychological problem. Why was it a psychological problem? Because I showed the classical cues that patients give psychotherapists when they first talk on their problem. Remember I was fifteen. I was confused. I was anxious over being rejected by girls. I was also irritated and resentful that things were not really straightforward. I didn't know what to believe. Were girls sexual creatures, or not? I felt that, without being able to put a finger on how, a number had been run on me. I felt that I had been conned and I didn't like it. I was resentful since I was operating on good faith, but I intuitively knew then somebody else wasn't. This is the classical syndrome of complaints with which the great majority of therapy clients begin describing their problem; confusion, anxiety, anger or irritation and resentment.

Also, what is different about a psychological problem from ordinary run of the mill problems of living? A psychological problem always has an negative emotional component. Unfortunately, in practical terms, it is nearly impossible to resolve without first resolving the emotional part. The emotional component and the primitive withdrawal coping behavior

pattern it prompts is the psychological analog to a warning the Medieval cartographer put on the blank, unexplored, unknown portion of his map; either *Here Be Dragons* — *Hic Sunt Dracones* — or a pictorial winged serpent. This archaic caution indicated there was an implicit threat and personal danger imminent, which one should avoid or retreat from. The psychological and emotional analogy to this archaic warning of personal threat is the significant part of the vast majority of complaints seen by psychotherapists. The great majority of us use this type of *Here Be Dragons* coping response, so to speak, with the option of either Remove The Dragon or Remove Yourself From The Dragon when we are faced with a psychological problem. This coping typically sets us to retreat and withdraw to an emotionally unsaturated portion of our environment with no connection to the troubles besetting us. This emotional component of the problem is the reason we can see an untreated psychological problem being carried as unneeded baggage throughout life until the person becomes old enough not to give a damn about most everything, including the negatives generated by the problem. Unfortunately, even then, the emotional component is unaffected by time alone and still can make us feel rotten. This is the reason why telling someone not to worry or that things will be fine doesn't work very well as a solution to the problem.

A psychological problem: What it is not

A psychological problem, not so incidentally, has nothing to do with being crazy or psychotic. As far as Psychology and Psychiatry can tell, for those unfortunate psychotic souls among us, with as yet no medication developed to return them to normal, some hard wiring in their central nervous system is faulty. This theoretical central nervous system fault would permanently distort their perception of things, happenings and people in their environment. While psychotics may have psychological problems, that is not why they are psychotic. Psychosis and psychological problems have nothing to do with one another. If you have a psychological problem it does not mean you are crazy.

A psychological problem: What is it?

What had happened to me that day in Hawaii fits precisely all the major conditions which make up a psychological problem. In fact, to illustrate the different parts of a psychological problem, I couldn't ask for a better example than what had happened to me. It was identical in

makeup to all other psychological problems. In fact, the makeup of that problem was identical to the of the problem of one of Sigmund Freud's most famous cases, Anna "O"; whose concerns produced conversion hysteria; she believed, and acted as if, her legs were paralyzed. This hysterical paralysis was an escape; a withdrawal from reality. It kept her from having to deal with the sociosexual negatives of getting accidentally sexually aroused, while on a narrow staircase, brushing past the erection of her drunken, irresponsible, dim bulb, roué of a father, who also hadn't the slightest clue the negative effect his promiscuities would have when he took his daughter as a young girl to his favorite bordello and sat her with the prostitutes in the parlor while he dallied upstairs. This sociosexual stimulus complex prompted her conversion hysteria as her emotional-avoidance *Here Be Dragons* coping response.

My psychological problem was also identical in makeup to the last, as far as I can tell, observed cases of conversion hysteria during 1972 in the West Virginia Appalachian coal mining region. These unsophisticated and barely educated miners found that they could not go underground again after surviving a mining disaster. Nor could they admit they were terrified by the environmental negatives in that black hole of a mine. Nor could they acknowledge the personal negative that they were something less than the ideal brave mining man. So they coped in the same way as Freud's patient, Anna "O", and found they would not have to deal with these negatives, if it were physically impossible for them to work again; i.e., if they believed — and acted as though — their legs were paralyzed. The mine and its terrors was the stimulus trigger for their own psychological withdrawal-avoidance *Here Be Dragons* coping response.

Amazingly enough, my psychological problem was also identical to that of an unassertive person trying to learn the skills presented in *When I Say No, I Feel Guilty*, for dealing with an emotional manipulator; one who makes that person automatically feel anxious, ignorant, foolish, or guilty if his request is not honored for loan of money, car, time off, relief of his responsibilities, etc. Although a smaller emotional threat than that faced by the miners fear of death, the unassertive person's induced feelings of guilt, foolishness or ignorance is still his set of psychological Dragons to be coped with by a compliance-avoidance response.

All these cases of "fancy" psychological problems were identical in etiology to my mundane one — not knowing how to approach girls and sexuality. For that reason, my problem then is an ideal case study to identify the parts of a psychological problem, minor or major, serious or

trivial, fancy or mundane, and to understand what each contributes to the dilemma. Let me point out to you each part in turn for myself, Freud's Anna "O", the Appalachian miners, and the unassertive person.

The first part of a psychological problem — A significant change in your environment

For me, something had happened, a change in my environment which made my previously valid belief, how I should behave towards girls without having to think on it, no longer useful. I had seen demonstrated that the teenage girls in my environment were interested in things sexual, and then again, that they were not interested in sex, both in the same day.

For Anna "O", the same thing — environmental change — triggered a psychological problem for her. Her environment had changed when her father's libertine, philandering sexuality blundered into her pristine and protected middle class restricted environment. There, such things as erections, whores, and accidental sexual stimulation by automatic neurological mechanism were not supposed to exist.

For the Appalachian miners, their environment changed when they were nearly killed, surviving only by chance as the mine shaft fell around them. That was not supposed to happen to macho, competent miners.

For an unassertive person, the demands of the manipulator make up the environmental change. Actually, environmental change is equivalent to environmental unpredictability. i.e., where the onset of the problem causes a belief to become faulty — it no longer correctly predicts what should happen in the environment to be successful. The belief of the non-assertive person on how to behave does not predict how to be successful with the manipulator. So the first condition, or part, which makes up a psychological problem is a significant change in your environment.

The second part of a psychological problem — A previously valid, But now malfunctioning belief

My old belief, which before had reliably told me how to behave with girls — they were not innately sexual creatures so to avoid rejection, don't push sexual things with them, but play up the love factor — was invalid. It was inconsistent. One time it correctly predicted what I should do. Another time it did not. After that change in my environment caused by Rebel's proof of teenybopper sexuality, my old belief could no longer

be relied upon as an automatic perceptual and behavioral guide towards girls. Previous to that morning it correctly told me what to do — avoid open sexuality. But after that morning, it didn't work. If this dilemma seems silly to you now in the 2000's, remember, then it was 1950, psychologically a lot closer to 1890 Vienna than 1990 Malibu. It was fifteen years before the sexual revolution. It wasn't silly then because no one knew, factually, what they were talking about. Science could not offer an opinion because it had not yet studied female sexuality and sexual arousal. However, it could tell you in the 50's a lot on how monkeys got neurologically aroused. But not how human females did — if they did.

This part of a problem also can be seen with Anna "O's" belief on how she should automatically feel and behave sexually — that decent middle class young women did not get sexually interested and/or aroused by being in a whorehouse or by being accidentally brushed with a drunken father's erection in passing on a narrow staircase. Her middle class belief concerning sex and how to behave towards her father was seriously challenged and made invalid by these unacceptable expansions and inclusions in her middle class environment.

Similarly, for the Appalachian miners, their beliefs that real men should not be afraid of anything were invalidated by feelings of terror during the mine accident and what had happened to them there. Those experiences and feelings were unacceptable to them.

Also for the unassertive person, we can see he has a malfunctioning belief which says that things should be fair, reasonable, logical, operate on good will, etc., and we all have a common goal of getting the job done. The unassertive person believes all this, yet always loses to the manipulator. He or she loses because the manipulator uses the noble concepts of fairness, reasoning, logic, good will, for the less than noble purposes of getting what the manipulator wants, not some common goal.

So the second condition, or part, which makes up a psychological problem is that one of your beliefs on how to automatically behave in your environment is shown to be invalid; it no longer predicts what you should do to be successful — receive positives and avoid negatives — in that changed environment.

The third part of a psychological problem — Newly revealed negatives triggered by change in the environment

The demonstrated change — that girls were indeed titillated by sex — revealed or created within my environment a bunch of negatives I did not

want to know, let alone acknowledge, with which I would then have to deal. The possible environmental negatives which I did not wish to acknowledge, were an unknown number of girls who, similar to the bunch which rejected my comic overtures, believed that I was the sexual pits.

For Anna "O", the change in her environment revealed unacceptable negatives concerning her father. Negatives for which she then had no guiding belief that would tell her how to deal with her father — shown to be an irresponsible, drunken, whoring, dim wit.

Similarly, for the Appalachian miners, the change in their environment, the mining accident which they barely survived, revealed an inescapable negative; they could really get killed or maimed on the job, no matter how macho or competent they believed they were.

For the unassertive person, environmental negative expansion, as we shall see shortly, always the initial sign of a psychological problem, is simulated by the manipulator arguing that previously unsuspected negative payoffs exist if things are not done the way the manipulator wants; using comments such as "You know your way is no good. It will screw things up and make us look bad. It will make me look dumb, but make you look like an idiot. What you want will be too * _____" (* alternatives: expensive, cheap, complicated, simple minded, much before its time, old fashioned, over planned, thoughtless, etc.,) The third condition, or part, which makes up a psychological problem are revealed negatives in your changed environment which are not acknowledged.

The fourth part of a psychological problem — Negatives about yourself newly revealed by the change in your environment

There was revealed for me by that environmental change in growing up, a personal negative; I possibly had zero sexual attraction to all girls, which implied I was a loser, something I certainly didn't want to know about. If this negative existed, I would have to acknowledge it to resolve the psychological problem I had just seen created for me with girls.

The environmental change which pointed out to Anna "O" that her father was a philanderer, also revealed to her that she could get mechanically, sexually aroused by what he did, and that was a totally unacceptable negative to her according to the middle class mores of 1890 Vienna.

For the Appalachian miners, their environmental change revealed to them that they were much less brave than they thought they were and

should be; an unacceptable negative.

For the unassertive person, the manipulator creates a believable simulation of personal negatives of a psychological problem with verbal judgments about any unwanted decision by the non-assertor, such as; "I loaned you my car last year! How selfish can you get?" "You always get upset over nothing. I only want you to co-sign for an auto loan." Or, "What kind of a person would want to do something like that?" "I thought you were my friend. Don't you care about those around you?" "Trust me. Don't let other people know you like to do that."

This part, the personal negative(s) revealed by change, is key to resolving the psychological problem. Simply because of their emotional negativity they directly inhibit the problem solving thinking needed to look at the beliefs which guide one's automatic behavior patterns and modify them to fit changes that have happened. Traditional talk psychotherapy, unfortunately, has no method for eliminating the emotional effect of personal negatives, except for talking about them, intermittently, over a long period of time. As a consequence, talk psychotherapy can take forever to get results. So the fourth condition, or part, which makes up a psychological problem are personal negatives revealed by the change in the environment, which are not acknowledged.

The fifth part of a psychological problem — Denial of any of the other four parts, or withdrawal from the changed part of the environment

My automatic response was to deny the environmental negatives and any personal negatives, thereby precluding any adaptive coping; the lack of which would insure that I would have a psychological problem, i.e., I would not know how to automatically perceive and behave towards girls.

For Anna "O", not only did she deny any significant change in her personal environment had taken place, but she withdrew from that part of her changed environment in a way we have seen happen in psychologically uneducated, unsophisticated, very restricted environments, such as 1890 middle class Vienna and 1970 Appalachia; by hysterical conversion or psychosomatic body reactions such as paralysis, blindness, fainting or blacking out, glove and sock anesthetics, disassociative states, amnesia, etc. For Anna "O", she was able to withdraw from her changed environment and not have to face her father on a day by day basis if she believed her legs were paralyzed and she could not walk.

This was also the coping option of the West Virginia Appalachian miners; believing they had paralysis of their legs, they were not expected to go back into that hell hole of a mine — without needing denial of fear.

Finally, the unassertive person copes by denial of, and withdrawal from, the simulated environmental and personal negatives given by the manipulator. To avoid the manipulator's induced negatives, the unassertive person simply gives the manipulator what he wants, thereby avoiding further exposure to more negatives, while denying anything is wrong.

Therefore, the fifth condition, or part, which makes up a psychological problem is a) denial of any of the other four conditions or parts of a psychological problem; a change in the environment, a malfunctioning belief, new negatives in the environment, or personal negatives exposed by the change, or b) withdrawal from the changed part of the environment and its negatives through psychological or physical means. We will look at these maladaptive psychological coping methods of denial and/or withdrawal in greater detail later when we examine the operation of the Coping Option Principle.

Taken together, parts three, four and five of the psychological problem is the psychological analog of the warning, *Here Be Dragons*, which Medieval mapmakers gave to travelers of little known, threatening waters, as well as the avoidance/withdrawal decisions and navigation behavior the shallow water sailor would adopt to cope. Throughout this book, example after example is given of the almost involuntary tendency of people to follow this type of primitive coping mandate, *Here Be Dragons, Beware and Retreat!* when emotional problems press upon them — including myself at age fifteen in trying to understand and cope with girls — and the consequent cementing of an emotionally bonded psychological problem in place of a simpler problem of living.

To understand what happened to me psychologically, let's look at those negatives which I didn't admit existed in the environment and about myself, and how I interpreted my now malfunctioning belief for interacting with girls. First, I believed that all girls were not interested in sex; so there was no problem. Then I believed, after a demonstration, that all girls were interested in sex; again no problem. But after my personal experience in being a sexual comic, I didn't know what to believe. I had observed two contradictory sets of data. One group of teenage females were interested in sexual things and another indistinguishable group were not. Therefore, presaging the scientist I was to be, I formulated a hypothesis (a modified belief) describing what I had seen with my

own two eyes; some teenyboppers were interested in sex and others were not. This hypothesis fit the data, as I saw it, perfectly. Even though it was an incomplete description of the data, it was accurate. It was one I liked even though it caused a psychological dilemma for me by making useless my old belief towards girls and how I should automatically behave towards them to avoid risking rejection. Even so, at the time, it never entered my head that there was at least one other hypothesis which would describe the data as well. Unfortunately, this second one was a hypothesis which would reveal a bunch of negatives in the environment and about myself with which I would have to deal if I posed it.

In short, the other hypothesis was that all teenyboppers were sexually interested in someone like my friend, but none were sexually interested in me. If I acknowledged this hypothesis, the environmental negatives with which I would have to deal would be bunches and bunches of girls who would find me sexually unattractive and I would be rejected at every approach. The personal negative in this dilemma which I could not acknowledge, of course, would be that if every teenybopper found me sexually unattractive, then I had to be sexually repugnant, to say the least.

Self confidence and competence—Nothing is all good, nor all bad, and we can cope with the bad

There was another more realistic hypothesis which I could have used to explain how things worked in sorting out sexual attraction and non-attraction. It's main characteristic is that it is not so oversimplified. This hypothesis, of course, reflects everything else in life where personal taste is involved. Different girls would find different boys attractive otherwise the whole sexual arrangement would collapse and the species could never reproduce. To encourage the compatible boy to approach a particular girl, all the girl had to do was what the first group of girls did with my friend; subtly let him know he was interesting. This is a more comprehensive description of the sexual interests of girls; more to the point than the one I had oversimplified before by saying only that some do and some don't.

If I had a more flexible and sophisticated belief towards girls and sexuality like this last one, I could have acknowledged that while some girls were not interested in me, some other girls, in all probability, must be. Thinking back upon it all now, I should have posed this more realistic hypothesis and saved myself a lot of self-doubt and uneasiness with

respect to all those potential negative females in my environment. No doubt some girls found me interesting. I'm sure they were just a bit too subtle in letting me know. Therefore, I had to live with this minor psychological problem for a couple of years before I had proof positive that girls were interested in me.

This last hypothesis, in fact, is the theme of this whole book. It is the basic functioning — as we shall see in great detail — of the competent psychological adult, compared to the ineffective psychological child; in analog terms, Learning To Live With Dragons, instead of Removing The Dragon or Removing Yourself from the Dragon.

Everybody gets psychological problems — But not everyone knows how to get over them

Now what does the story I just related about my early sociosexual interactions with girls tell us? First, that the makeup of a psychological problem and how we acquire it is not very mysterious or complex. It also tells us that psychological problems are part of normal living, growing, maturing, even becoming successful and getting old. All these things produce real changes in your environment. All of us come to areas of life where we come across the emotional, Medieval warning *Here Be Dragons*. Everyone gets psychological problems and we all have to learn to deal with them. Psychological problems can be caused by every significant change in our environment. This is because we have a belief that tells us how to automatically behave and perceive things and people in every part of our environment. In the opening example I gave you, when we go into puberty and have to learn about changes in the opposite sex, as I did, we can generate psychological problems; possibly coping poorly, if at all, in that area, for many, many years. In another example, when we leave school and get a job, our environment changes. Then old beliefs may produce a chronic problem on how to cope with others, including your boss, at work. In a scary example, when we get our first promotion and have to tell others what to do, and make sure they do it, our beliefs have to change to match the changes in our environment. But our beliefs may not change at all if we do not want to recognize and accept how poor we are at supervising other people. Before we can improve, we first have to know how bad a boss we are. This psychological problem, becoming a boss, when we really don't have a valid belief which tells us how to be one, is one of the leading causes of suicide. The

most wasteful example, I believe, because it is totally unnecessary with education, happens in many marriages. When we get married, our environment changes, and our preset beliefs on marriage and living may need revision or just a tune up. But all too often, you can observe that one partner seems to believe that he or she has been given the word on what makes a perfect marriage from Mom, God, or some other infallible authority. So that one proceeds on in bulldozer fashion running over the other, left and right, as often as is felt necessary to shape marriage into exactly what is believed it should be. This is done while denying ignorance; that most of us start out really not knowing much on what marriage is. Then we deny the negative environmental evidence which points out that our companion beliefs on the long lasting nature of love don't seem to be working much better either.

The list of psychological problems that we can encounter in normal life situations is endless; puberty, relationships, loss of love, marriage, work, parentage, especially motherhood, maturity, retirement, etc. But because they all follow this sequence of change, belief invalidation, and refusal to acknowledge personal and/or environmental negatives, they can be dealt with, by yourself, without psychotherapy, if you choose.

My story on teenage sexuality also tells us that once you get past denying that things are wrong, resolving psychological problems is quite straightforward. After you learn how to stop automatically denying the existence of negative things which you don't like, you need only deal with the four remaining components of a problem; 1) environmental change, 2) a malfunctioning belief on how to perceive and behave automatically in that changed part of your environment, 3) the negatives revealed in your environment by that change, and 4) the negatives revealed about yourself by that change. Learning how to do this yourself, instead of having to become dependent upon a therapist, is what the rest of this book is all about. Learning how to cope with all sorts of negatives, contradictions and complexities is learning to be a psychological adult who deals with such complications of life routinely without raising a sweat.

Getting a realistic look at what psychological problems psychotherapists and counselors see

The topic of this book, the cause and cure of psychological problems of normal people, has at least two major implications which can be observed for you and anyone else with a psychological problem. The first

is that you can observe you are not abnormal in any way because you have a psychological problem. Psychological problems are a normal expectation and consequence of living. A second observation is that a psychological problem has nothing to do with those afflictions described in the diagnostic and statistical manuals used by professionals to classify abnormality, pathology and mental illness. Some simple arithmetic makes the importance of this implication very clear. There are two different, distinct populations of people who are treated by professionals like psychologists, psychiatrists, clinical social workers and marriage, family and child counselors. The first group are those who have psychological problems, and the second who have serious psychiatric problems, which incidentally, are not likely to get better without medication. In my professional experience, the vast majority of people, over 95% of the clients, who see general practice psychotherapists and counselors on an outpatient basis, come in with the following types of complaints; "I can't get along with my _____" * (alternatives: * husband, daughter, wife, mother, relatives, neighbor, landlord, boss, subordinates, director, agent, studio head, lawyer, etc.) If only I had _____** (alternatives: ** confidence, knowledge, talent, luck, direction, friends, support, money, a good script, etc.)," and other complaints of this type. These clients are not sick in any sense, or crazy. Their complaints are not listed in the professional diagnostic manuals. The closest things you will see listed in such diagnostic manuals are diagnostic labels like **Adjustment Reactions To _____***** (alternatives: *** **Adult Life, Childhood, Adolescence**, etc.) In a diagnostic manual of 567 pages, adjustment disorders take up three pages. Another similar label resembling the vast majority of problems we see in therapy is **Conditions Not Attributable To A Mental Disorder That Are A Focus Of Treatment**, which is self explanatory, taking up four pages out of 567. The other classifications seen which also are not as serious are the anxiety and phobic reactions, but these are usually — and appropriately — seen by behavioral specialists rather than the general talk psychotherapist.

My whole point here, of course, is that you are normal, like the vast, overwhelming majority of us. Even so, there are not enough therapists in the country to see everyone who finds him or herself with a psychological problem. There are only about 150,000 of us of all types nation wide. So, if you find you have such a problem, your best bet, efficiency and cost wise, is self-help, and as we shall see in a moment from a study out of UCLA on types of therapists and modes of therapy, as far as we are

concerned, a self-help book can do the job as well as a therapist.

Difficulties thought of as psychological in nature which do not fit this model of the psychological problem — Appetitive, Character, and Behavioral habit patterns

The obvious major classes of psychological difficulties which do not match the definition of the psychological problem given here, of course, are the psychoses and organic disorders, such as brain damage, neurologic deficiencies, etc. Another class of difficulties thought of as being psychological in nature which do not match the definition are the so called appetitive behavior patterns, for example, such as overeating, sexual “addiction” and deviancy, fetishes, pedophilia and child molestation, etc. What is the major distinction between these difficulties people have and the ones described by the psychological problem? All of the appetitive disorders are voluntary. The deviant behavior which gives the difficulty its name is a matter of choice and not a compulsion. All the types of the psychological problem herein described have a major involuntary characteristic — the negative emotional reaction to the environmental/personal negatives uncovered by the change in the environment. For that reason alone, those appetitive disorders have little or nothing in common with the psychological problem dealt with here, and very little of what is discussed here apply to them.

The only “appetitive” disorder which can be looked at as in part approximating the definition of the psychological problem described herein is substance abuse; the etiology of which is talked about in Chapter Three along with the myth of substance “addiction.”

Other classes of clients sometimes seen by therapists which do not fit this model of psychological problems are the so called “Character” or “Personality” disorders, including that of the psychopath. Character disorders are those conditions which seem to defy the normal set of rewards and punishments we all deal with daily. An example of the possible etiology or development of this type of psychological difficulty is given in Chapter Eight, where a caring mother protects her teenage son from the normal, expected, everyday consequences of not attending to one’s own personal responsibilities, like getting up in time to catch the school bus. Thinking he had a school phobia, she drove him there several times a week when he missed the bus. He knew she would bail him out of the expected negative consequences of doing so. Of course, when she caught

on to what was happening, he had to find his own way to school, was extraordinarily late, faced the vice principle with no excuses, and never again missed the bus. If, on the other hand, this caring mom kept up bailing her son out of all sorts of negative consequences of his daily life, over the long term he would develop a habit and expectation that he needn't worry about the consequences of his actions, and would probably be diagnosed with a "character" disorder. In short, it appears as if, and is very likely that "character" disorders are developed by those unlucky people whose payoff environments have been restricted by some outside agency, wherein they face few of the likely negatives the rest of us do. An example of this type of character disorder is spousal abuse, where the abused spouse, to protect the relationship, refuses to press charges against her (or his) mate, and maintains the abusive pattern of behavior by restricting the abuser's negative payoff environment. Character disorders, in brief, appear to be not much more than very long term, reinforced (or unpunished) bad habits. As soon as the restricted environment is expanded, negatives follow abuse, the "character disorder" disappears.

The first time I looked at one of my social work colleague's write up of a psychiatric oriented interview of a woman asking for help, I was fascinated to read the type and amount of detail describing the woman's descent in personal character to the bottom of the mental health heap; i.e., "An overweight, 30ish woman, soft spoken, with a large chocolate ice cream stain on the left breast of her sweater..." That detailed description, "Overweight," and "chocolate stained breast," was used to justify applying a diagnosis of a character disorder, while in reality, it was describing a violation of social class dress and femininity standards that would, still today, shock most middle class woman who could place themselves in that patient's shoes, even figuratively. Character or personality disorders are typically diagnosed for violation of social class standards of behavior, as we shall see in Chapter Ten. Although these psychological difficulties do not apply to the psychological problem discussed here, as we shall see in the next chapter, the Environmental Law of Behavior still accurately describes and accounts for them.

Looking at what we call the "psychopathological" disorder, or absence of internalized guilt for prohibited behaviors, its practical use is more as a descriptive label rather than a diagnosis since an assessment of how much guilt any of us should feel for violating rules of behavior is debatable and arbitrary. Psychologists, incidentally, are noted as being the most "psychopathic" or having the least sense of guilt for prohibited

behavior of any demographic group.

In short, over ninety-five percent of people seen in psychotherapy are normal and their complaints have nothing to do with those of the unfortunates fitting most of the descriptions in the diagnostic manuals. The vast majority of afflictions listed in the diagnostic manuals describe very handicapped people with serious psychiatric problems. Most therapists and counselors rarely, if ever, see, in their practice, people with such psychic handicaps in life. These patients are almost always seen in public health settings because the cost of long term treatment would break any family except the Rockefellers. People with such serious psychiatric problems, where there is probably something faulty with their neurological hard wiring from birth, as best can be gotten from the realistic * statistical estimates of the manuals, constitute less than one and a half percent of the total population, if that. This total percentage is very difficult to determine, as the diagnostic and statistical manuals are quite vague, preferring terms like, *"less rare than thought before"*, *"not as prevalent as in previous decades"*, or *"common"*, instead of hard numbers. They do give, however, estimated percentages for the most serious psychoses using strict interpretations of diagnoses, i.e., schizophrenia and paranoia; about five hundred thousand and seventy-five thousand, respectively, nation wide. Politics also plays a part in giving us a skewed impression of how many of us have psychiatric/psychological disorders. Tipper Gore, the former first lady wannabe, backed up by the Clinton White House and the National Institute of Mental Health's slippery, politically interpreted statistics, recently claimed in a press conference for the national media, that twenty percent of us develop mental health problems each year. Tipper, spinning this political hype to bolster federal funding to

* Footnote.

Realistic here means those estimates which are in the same ballpark as figures from other sources, and which do not violate common sense. Common sense is very often violated by professionals because they do not place their estimates in another context to see if they make sense. For example, in a recent professional seminar on cognitive behavior modification at UCLA, the speaker claimed that a) there were two percent of the population diagnosed as agoraphobic (having a fear of a panic attack in public) and b) that a recent survey paper and pencil questionnaire results gave a figure of six and a half percent of the total population. Two percent is half the population of Southern California and six and a half percent is more than half the total population of California. If we had that many agoraphobics, they would be lined up around the block, kicking in the doors of therapy clinics trying to get in for treatment. Another way of looking at this claim is to count up how many people you know - several hundred at least - and to realize that 6.5 percent of the population is every eighteenth person you know. Is every eighteenth person you know an agoraphobic who has panic attacks?

mental health agents, did not think through that statement to see if it were realistic. Her claim, as stated, would mean that in five short years, all of us become mentally ill.

Given these caveats on what problems this book applies to, let's look at the five variations in development of the psychological problem.

The five major types of psychological problems of normal people

As we go through the later, self-help method chapters, you will see that I only list the following five major types of psychological problems. All the psychological problems of normal people — as far as I can tell — can be classified within these five types. This is quite a simplification for ninety-five percent of the workload of the clinical psychologist and other psychotherapists. The reason why identifying these five types of psychological problems is important to you is that if your situation fits one of these problem types and fits the model of the psychological problem, then you know what to do to resolve it.

Psychological Problem Type I:

Irrational emotional bonds between child and parent, keeping them in child and parent roles which prevent remaking the relationship into that of two adults.

Psychological Problem Type II:

Irrational emotional self assessment as a result of unpredicted change in social, sexual, performance, or expertise standards at school, job, home or other situations where early experience does not predict what is needed to be successful in, or generalize to, a later situation.

Psychological Problem Type III:

Irrational emotional self assessment in dating/courting environments preventing the use of one's own personal relationship negatives for evaluating potential future mates.

Psychological Problem Type IV:

Irrational emotional self assessment dealing with unpredictable negatives from close, caring partners during conflict as well as in sexual situations.

Psychological Problem Type V:

Irrational emotional self assessment dealing with negative consequences

of personal loss in relationships, loved ones, career, physical or mental ability and skills.

To see where we are going in pursuing the resolution of psychological problems, let me first classify the problems we analyzed earlier, and then give you an example of each type of problem. Where would you classify the problem of myself as a teenager with girls, that of Freud's Anna "O", the Appalachian miners, and the unassertive person? If you think about it for a moment you can see that each of them fit the description of problem type II, except for the unassertive person. Me, Anna "O" and the Appalachian miners all came across a social, sexual, performance, or expertise change in environmental requirements for which we had no adequate belief to guide us. Our previous experience — or lack of it — was of no help in the changed environment, so we come under problem type II. Another example of Type II is the difficulty of a new parent, usually mother, who goes into postpartum depression because the down and dirty reality of rearing an infant does not match all the indoctrinated beliefs about how wonderful — for others — it is having a child. Irrational fears and phobias, including psychological trauma suffered from war, natural disaster, being mugged or raped, etc., also fit neatly within the Type II description. Type II problems, I think, are the easiest to see matching with the five step etiology of a psychological problem.

Getting back to the original question I posed, where does the unassertive person fit? Think for a moment about the description given earlier of the problem of being unassertive and emotionally manipulated. The unassertive person's problem is described best by problem type I, the irrational emotional bonding of child to parent. Let me show you why. In becoming assertive, the learner also becomes — in no small part — emotionally independently of other people in getting one's needs met, ^{and} but learns through experience that this is not a real problem. This describes, in large part, the functioning of the psychological adult. The unassertive person, on the other hand, is afraid of the emotional effect and consequence of being assertive, much in the way a child is afraid of losing the affection and good will of a parent when misbehaving. The unassertive person does not feel this way by accident. Mom (primarily) indoctrinated him or her in that way of believing for a definite purpose; to more easily control a child with guilt induction in the same way she was identically indoctrinated by her parents, the same way her grandparents were indoctrinated by her great grandparents, etc., ad infinitum. With this background the manipulator of the unassertive person simply assumes the

There are two possible readings here

role previously held by the parent with no trouble making the unassertive one feel guilty in not obeying the manipulator's wishes.

A good example of Type III, having a psychological problem relating to courting and dating in evaluating and selecting a possible mate, is the difficulty of a person who is unable to practically deal with his or her own personal negatives in a dating situation; deliberately making a possible partner aware of personal negatives to see how he or she copes with them. This exposure of all sides of self to a possible mate, of course, is the purpose of courting; i.e., to see if both possible partners are compatible with one another. To see if a possible mate is, or nearly is, a psychological adult — the one essential requirement needed to make a close relationship practical and work. Although this type of problem seems simple and perhaps trivial, let me assure you it is simple, but not trivial. The implication it foresees for one's future happiness or misery in close relationships is actually staggering. The last set of stats I looked at for divorce in this country cited an 85% failure rate for marriages at age 18 or under when both partners don't know their ear from their elbow in relating to another person on a close basis, besides jumping in and out of bed.

An example of Type IV is the difficulties of one partner in a close, caring relationship, when anything goes by the other partner in regulating the first's desires, wants, and behaviors to control what goes on in the relationship. This unilateral regulation makes heavy use of assumed, perceived or real personal negatives in controlling one's relationship partner. This use of personal negatives can lead to withdrawal from all intimate, sharing situations within the relationship, including sexual relations.

An example of Type V is the problem of the person who loses a lover, mate, family member, child, job, career, or physical/mental ability or skill. Although this type of problem is the most emotionally devastating because of the very severe environmental negatives involved, it is, in my experience, the most straightforward in resolution of all the problems of normal people. We will see much more detail about all of these types of problems in the self help chapters to come.

What is psychological penicillin — Or the psychological equivalent to penicillin?

A very recent review at UCLA on the outcomes of several hundred psychotherapy studies (see reference list) concluded what some of us in the profession suspected from experience; There was very little, or no, significant differences between professional therapists, paraprofessionals,

self-help, or even self-help books in the outcome of resolving psychological problems. Across the range of problems, one of these treatment givers could be slightly superior to others, but not in any significant way.

What does this rather shocking — but not surprising — comparison mean for you about the choices you have for resolving a psychological problem? This review of these studies did not conclude that there were zero real differences because all the therapy givers had zero positive effect. In fact, many were effective, but for those therapies which worked, it didn't matter who "therapised" those with a problem. Most important, the conclusion of this review means that, statistically, you have the same chance, with instruction in a self-help mode, of resolving your own psychological problem, as you would if you sought professional help. The review pointed out the use of a self-help book in learning to resolve a psychological problem can be as effective as employing a professional therapist.

The only meaningful interpretation of the conclusions given us by these researchers at UCLA is that whatever was used that resolved the problems in these studies, it didn't seem to matter who — or even what — administered it. The medical model analogy of this finding is the administration of penicillin (or some other medication such as insulin) where it matters little who (the Doc, Nurse or you) — or what (injection or pill) — metes it out. Whether or not you get the medication is the significant variable in the equation, not who or what gives it to you. This therapy review, therefore, makes sense only if some sort of psychological equivalent to penicillin is being administered because, then it matters little who — or what — dispenses the treatment; a shrink, a psych tech, yourself, a computer, or even a self-help book.

If that analysis of what happened in all those clinical studies reviewed is accurate, and I think it is, then for our purposes, we need to answer the question; What was the psychological penicillin used? To answer that question, we can look at the characteristics required of such a psychological penicillin:

- 1) It must work relatively fast. If it takes months or years to "cure" and produce positive results, it is basically useless. You would not be able to see if it really helps or not.
- 2) Its results must be measurable. If you cannot measure whether or not it produces changes which make a difference, it is basically useless. Again you would not be able to see if it really helps or not.
- 3) If you know from past experience that it should work fast, yet you get

no results, then it must have alternative methods of doing the same job, (like increased doses, or combinations along with other antibiotics) you can substitute to get the same positive results previously obtained.

Behavioral methods are used to treat a variety of problems ranging from phobias, compulsions, depression, sexual difficulty and deviancy, smoking, obesity, to faltering relationships simply because behavioral methods usually meet these three criteria of a psychological penicillin.

What's the best way to use the material in this book?

The UCLA study definitely indicates you can learn behavioral methods in a self-help way, by yourself from a book. The way most readers learned material in *When I Say No, I Feel Guilty* supports that conclusion. Those readers did it in a number of ways; on their own in a true self-help way, or with the help of a practice partner, a friend, relative or neighbor, or in a class with a teacher and other students. Much later it was available in individual or group sessions with psychotherapists who decided to make it available to clients who needed to learn to be more assertive in a systematic way. All of these ways of learning how were effective and successful. Although the material in this book is specific to resolving a psychological problem, any of these methods used by the readers of "*Guilty*" will work, self-help practice by yourself, with a partner, or in a class specific to this material. In a few years, it will be available from psychotherapists in group and individual sessions. Each of these ways of learning has its own particular advantages in resolving a psychological problem. The easiest way, of course, is to go to a professional psychotherapist and have him or her do all the work and guide you through the process. Unfortunately, when that way of doing it becomes available, it will be quite expensive. Self-help is the cheapest, and in one way, best of all. You would be able to say you did it yourself with all the self-confidence that method brings with it for resolving any future psychological problems you will encounter in life.

In summary of the beginning —

What is to come in the rest of this book

The aim of this book is to teach you something; to psychologically educate you in the life factors which can contribute to the generation of psychological problems and also block you from resolving them if you are unaware of their effect upon you, i.e., the primitive, maladaptive

Here Be Dragons coping reaction, which most of us automatically use because of our lack of psychological sophistication. The object of this book is to teach you about the psychological problems we all are subject to, and how you, yourself, can cope by resolving them. Therefore, we are going to look at, in each of the following chapters, the parts which make up a psychological problem; Environmental change, beliefs as behavior preprogramming, revealed environmental and personal negatives, maladaptive vs. adaptive coping, and then applying what you learn in your life.

This learning sequence starts in Chapter Two on the Environmental Law of Behavior, which details how our environment really controls and guides our behavior, without you and I necessarily having to know that this is happening to us. Before you can begin to work on eliminating psychological problems, you will need to know why you are doing what you are doing in order to do it effectively. You need to see, especially, how we all automatically perceive our environment, even if it is among the most restricted and regulated of all possible environments, as the only possible environment; instead of only one out of many possible environments. In short, as we will see, psychological problems are intimately linked to expansion and restriction of your operating environment.

After that is a chapter on the many ways we deny, rationalize and/or withdraw from our troubled payoff environment. There we can look in detail at the adaptive as well as maladaptive options you have in coping with psychological problems.

Next is a chapter on learning the use of self help techniques which can be used to emotionally desensitize personal and environmental negatives; always the key part of a psychological problem. Then come chapters on different types of problems. You can see the rationale for this procedure with respect to the Appalachian miners fears of coal mining producing the belief that their legs are paralyzed. The optimal remedy, of course, would be to eliminate their fears of the coal mine — as is done routinely by behavior therapists for their client's fears — eliminating the need for the belief that their legs are paralyzed. One can see this linkage in a self-evident, common sense fashion. However, without this linkage jumping out in the light of our present knowledge on how to do things, we would not see the direct parallel between Anna "O's" problem and the miners. We can desensitize, de-emotionalize, a client to just about any negative as long as we can define it. Therefore, if Sigmund Freud knew about the power of behavioral techniques, including verbal flooding — detailed

later — he could have, and probably would have, eliminated Anna "O"'s apprehension of getting sexually aroused inappropriately as a remedy for the need for her to believe that her legs were paralyzed. (A hypothetical teaching dialog with Anna "O" is given in Chapter Six.) So without knowledge of this emotional desensitization, you would be in the position of Anna "O"; having to modify your invalid beliefs the long, hard way by just talking about them, talking about them and talking about them; perhaps for years as is done in traditional psychotherapy when someone primitively opts to use our *Here Be Dragons* coping response.

Included in one of these chapters on troubled close relationships is a section on applying what you will have learned about the cause of psychological problems; their resolution to patching up or applying preventative maintenance to relationships and marriages, using the principles given us by the Environmental Law of Groups in Chapter Eight.

The last chapter is on preventing future psychological problems using the information given by the Environmental Law of Beliefs. This law details how your beliefs are used as automatic directives for routinely and efficiently prompting you on how to be successful in your environment. In this chapter we also look at a teaching device; the Environmental Bill of Belief Observations, wherein the most common inhibitions blocking recognition of how one becomes a thinking, psychological adult are detailed for you. Using that teaching device we will look at your metabeliefs, or overall beliefs which can lock your everyday beliefs on how to efficiently, routinely behave in everyday life in psychological concrete; thereby frustrating your efforts to modify your own beliefs.

In that final chapter we will look at how to recognize an invalid belief as just a belief, and not a factual imperative you must follow. Curiously, this involves teaching you some novel common sense ways to think critically, so you can be sure you are problem solving instead of being locked into never going beyond the beliefs in which you have been indoctrinated since childhood. It also prompts you to be aware that people, still today, are engaged in trying to indoctrinate you to their viewpoints, instead of educating you about any controversy in which they are involved.

Now let's turn to Chapter Two. There we can see how and why change in your environment is the first etiological step of any psychological problem you may have. And then why the final step in resolving it is returning to your changed environment and feeling comfortable there as a psychological adult despite the negative changes that have occurred; being able to Learn To Live With Dragons.

Chapter Two

The Environmental Law Of Behavior Why You Behave And Believe Every Day As You Do, And Therefore Get Psychological Problems

*Discovery consists of seeing what everybody has seen
and thinking what nobody has thought.*

von Szent-Gyorgyi

A good friend of mine, Marion Jacobs, was the executive coordinator of the UCLA Psychology Clinic. For years, the UCLA clinic has been rated, by the staffs of other clinics, as #1 in the nation for training clinical psychologists. This honor is due in large part to the efforts and hard work of Marion, along with Chuck Nakamura and Elliot Rodnick,* the last two directors of the clinic. The reason I tell you this is to show that Marion is a sharp cookie, no slouch — right on the ball. This makes the following simple observation about how we all perceive things in our environment even more revealing. Marion reviewed early drafts of some of the chapters of this book and gave me feedback on overall beliefs about the sexuality of women (and men too.) Being a feminist, Marion noted that I might be accused of just building up a straw man which could be easily knocked down since it was as plain to her as the nose on my face that people didn't really believe those old, traditional ideas about women and men any more.

I smiled at her critique because it is a wonderful example of automatically seeing whatever particular environment we are in as the total environment, no matter how small a slice of the greater environment it is. The reason I smiled was that I can still see the shock on my wife, Jennie's face, when Sam Yorty beat out Tom Bradley in the election for mayor of L.A. thirty and some years ago. Jennie worked in the midst of a crowd of liberal democrats at the United Nations Center in Westwood to elect Tom

* footnote

"Rod," incidentally, one of the world's leading authorities on schizophrenia, was the one responsible for aiming *When I Say No, I Feel Guilty* towards a popular psychology book instead of to professionals with journal articles, by asking "Would you rather have five thousand people read it, or five million?"

Bradley — all of whom were convinced there was no reason that old Sam should remain in office. Jennie, unfortunately, made the mistake — at the midbrain level, not the thinking cortex — in automatically generalizing from a very restricted liberal environment of West L.A. to the more realistic expanded political environment of greater Los Angeles. She assumed that what she saw everyday in Westwood was total reality. Marion did the same thing at UCLA, at Marina Del Rey, in Bel Air, and in Laguna. She — as we all do — automatically saw her little restricted slice of the greater environment as the total environment. She did this in the same way Jennie did, and neither of them are ever without both oars in the water. The reality was, and still is that traditional beliefs about the sexual nature of men and women do exist in the expanded real life environment outside of UCLA.

Why do I tell this story? Because your environment, whatever it is, however it is biased, no matter what you perceive it as, is the fundamental prompter of your behavior, beliefs and emotions. In short, you automatically behave and believe — and get psychological problems — according to the particular environment in which you live, even if you perceive it as something it is not. To be able to correct psychological problems, as well as prevent them, you need to understand that what you believe you are seeing around you day by day, is not the whole enchilada.

Is Freud's Superego fixed — Or is it too, dependent upon the environment?

This is especially true for our perception of what Freud labeled the Superego, or our social conscience. In 1890 Vienna, Freud's middle class clients could not conceive that there could be any other moral system of values than the one facing them day by day in their particular — even for that time — uniquely conservative psychological environment. Like Jennie and Marion's liberal perception of their own restricted environment, Freud's clients saw no other alternatives besides what immediately surrounded them. And if I may be so bold to say so, it is very likely that you do the same.

The Superego, incidentally, is the linchpin of analytic psychotherapy — everything therein hinges on it being fixed and immutable for life. The fixed Superego is the reason traditional therapists warn that you can only understand your problem — not resolve it. Freud saw the internal psyche as the fixated and ruling agent, not the external, rigidly restricted

social environment of 1890 Vienna. This principle — your perceived environment (your limited social payoff milieu) is not the entire environment and therefore can change significantly — is the same as saying your perceived Superego is not the entire Superego — it too can change significantly. Contrary to what traditional therapists maintain, not only can you understand your problem, but you can do something about it! You can resolve psychological problems because the Superego is mutable and can change to fit the new environment. The locus of control of the Superego is not within the psyche, but in the payoff environment. It is not fixated in childhood as Freud and others thought, but is adaptable throughout life as long as the external payoff environment is adaptable. Any other arrangement would not allow us to cope with changing environments — which our species has demonstrated throughout history as a major factor in its survival and conquest of this planet.

To follow through on this notion of a mutable Superego, recognize that your value system is based upon your beliefs. Your beliefs are based upon the particular psychological environment in which you live. Consequently, because we perceive our particular restricted environment as the entire environment, we also perceive our beliefs — which program our automatic routine behavior — as universal beliefs which describe how we should behave, feel and relate in every situation; the next best thing to factual information. So the key to understanding confusing psychological problems is to understand how we get mixed up when our psychological environment changes significantly. This is why you need to know how you and your environment automatically interact in shaping your behaviors, emotions, beliefs, and your perceptions too; and how simply dreadful the results can be — at times — of automatically seeing your particular environment as the entire and immutable environment.

To learn how your environment figures in any psychological problem that may occur, you have to understand and know the meaning of two significant concepts that not only define the creation of a psychological problem and define the resolution of it, but also freeze as well as reshape the Superego. These notions are **restriction** and **expansion** of your environment. To understand these concepts, we will look at examples such as infidelity, falling in love, brainwashing, cultism, mothers rearing daughters by themselves, emotional over-dependency, the Stockholm Syndrome, chronic depression, control of professors' behavior by students, training a dog to shake hands, education, as well as psychological problems and their resolution. These particular phenomena are important to

look at because each of them are good examples of expansion and/or restriction of one's environment.

Why, for example, am I going to show you how restriction of the environment is necessary to train a dog? Because the same restriction used in training a dog to do a trick, like shake hands, is what causes you to fall in love. Why is it important to understand that environmental restriction is the major factor in your falling in love? Because the same restriction that causes you to fall in love is the major factor in brainwashing your beliefs. And why is brainwashing important to understand? Because the same environmental restriction that is the major factor in brainwashing is the primary factor in acquiring a psychological problem. So, to really understand what you are dealing with when you try to resolve your psychological problem, it is important that you know what is necessary to train a dog, fall in love, and brainwash someone because all follow the same specific process you can recognize when you become psychologically troubled.

Very quickly, let me lay out two sets of characteristics about environment restriction and expansion that we can observe right away, and go into in greater detail later. First, you can observe yourself, if you will, that a short time expansion of one's environment followed by a restriction of it can indicate a psychological problem has occurred without resolution — the *Here Be Dragons* coping response has been employed, with either the Remove The Dragon, or Remove Yourself from the Dragon options. An expansion of one's environment with no subsequent restriction can indicate either that a psychological problem has occurred and has been resolved, or no psychological problem has occurred. The purpose of this whole chapter is to explore and understand the implications of these two statements. Why environmental restriction and expansion not only cause psychological problems, but do so because they are everyday functions which steer your daily life. This environment phenomenon will become clearer once you understand what environmental restriction or expansion means, especially with respect to your coping options, be they for dealing with everyday situations or a psychological problem.

Next, the concepts of environmental restriction and expansion are related respectively to the concepts of the psychological child and adult. The psychological child, because of a lack of experience and sophistication, has a very high probability of employing, almost automatically, the primary, primitive method of coping with difficulties inherited from his/her animal ancestors; physical or psychological flight. The psychological

I think he has to include significant cave givers and peer

adult, in contrast, does not involuntarily use environmental restriction as a coping method for the possible negatives, confusions, and mix ups of an expanded environment. A psychological adult is always associated with an environment payoff expansion. Environmental expansion always includes more negatives, contradictions, confusion, and no workable road maps from Standard Oil to guide you on your way — you are venturing into uncharted (for you) territory. On the other hand, environmental restriction, that is, staying within one's bounds, is associated with the psychological child — one without the maturity and experience to be able to handle such confusing negatives that occur when you expand your life. Let's suppose that you are less mature psychologically than you find satisfactory. If so, and you keep your environment as expanded as possible — not retreating when negatives and contradictions present themselves — you can become more of a psychological adult. Someone who is very competent in dealing with life's vicissitudes. While this may sound brave, it is not. It is more of a practical mode of coping, resolving and adapting to things which would otherwise cause you to shut yourself off from significant areas in your life — areas where you very likely have, and could again, get some of your most rewarding and important positives.

What you first need, above all else — In resolving a psychological problem

The natural progression of resolving a psychological problem is exactly in the reverse order of its development; i.e., eliminate denial and/or withdrawal (5), desensitize personal (4) as well as environmental (3) negatives, establish thinking control over a malfunctioning belief (2), and then rejoin the changed environment to work out practical and logistical details, not psychological ones. This procedure is very simple, but not necessarily easy. To make this procedure as easy as possible you need specific information on the “why” of things before tackling any of these steps. You need to understand where you are going, what you are doing, and why you are doing it. To accomplish this first necessary step in resolving a psychological problem, you need to understand your environment. You need to understand the scientific laws that spell out how you automatically interact with your environment — in a practical way such that in so doing, you know whether you are operating as a psychological child or adult. Understanding yourself and your interaction with your

psychological environment is what this chapter is about. You may be surprised by where it takes you.

What is your psychological environment?

When I talk about your environment, I'm not referring to the same things as the environmentalists talk about. By environment, I'm not referring to endangered species, or wilderness, or smog and pollution and acid rain; although these things certainly are part of your and my environment. What I mean by your environment is your psychological environment; your payoff environment; the sources, amounts, and types of positive (reward) and negative (punishment) reinforcements available to you in your environment. Your psychological environment parallels your physical environment but they are not always the same. The payoffs in the psychological environment can be radically restricted or expanded while your physical environment may seem much the same.

If you are like myself, and want to understand something in detail before you use it — so you're in control and not someone else — you will be interested in the following presentation of the scientific basis for the definition of the psychological problem, the five major types of psychological problems, and the scientific basis for their treatment. If you and I are of one mind in this way of doing things, read on. If not, you can browse through this portion of the chapter. Not getting involved here in the more scientific material of this section will not hurt your use of the self help techniques presented later that are based upon this scientific material — to rid yourself of a problem. But with that option also goes an unavoidable choice of having to accept what often seems to be the first line of a con man, "Trust me." So, if what you read later on seems a bit out of your ken, you can always come back here to this section for a review of the basics, and no harm done. All it will cost you is a little more reading time.

What is a scientific law, especially a psychological law?

Most people are turned off by scientific laws simply because elementary science and physics classes make them more "mathematically scientific" and more frightening, than they need be. Let me have the luxury of teaching you how simple scientific laws can be viewed — and then used to understand more clearly yourself and how you do things. Let me first do this with the physical laws and then with psychological laws, showing

how helpful they can be in to keep us on track and avoid becoming mired in nonsense and trivia in pursuing a psychological problem.

When anyone talks about a scientific law, you needn't feel intellectually intimidated. These laws describe the physical things around you as well as what you do everyday. Albert Einstein reminded us, "Most of the fundamental ideas of science are essentially simple, and may, as a rule, be expressed in a language comprehensive to everyone." In fact, the simpler laws are, the closer they are to accurately describing a wider array of nature's phenomena. They needn't be stated in mathematical formulae, so if you never were much good in algebra, that doesn't mean you can't readily understand them. Einstein, originally trained as a mathematician, had a sense of humor about this tendency of scientists to dress up their ideas with mathematics, "Do not worry about your difficulties in mathematics, I assure you that mine are greater."

Newton's scientific law of motion on walking

Isaac Newton is rated by other scientists as one of the two greatest scientists in history. He is in that class only with Einstein for thinking big, literally and figuratively. He is credited for scientifically organizing the world, pointing out laws that accurately describe, on a universal scale, from how the planets move, down to how ordinary objects like golf balls, softballs, and billiards behave when we hit them. For example, Newton simply stated a basic physical law of motion by saying for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. That is a basic, scientific physical law. Newton meant that things interact and have to balance out. For example, when you walk, if you push in one direction with your foot, you have no choice but to travel in the opposite direction. It has a lot of other implications, but basically that's what that law means, and as Einstein pointed out to us, you don't need a mathematical formula to understand it.

Newton's law of motion on golf, softball and billiards

Newton also showed us in another law of motion that acceleration (how fast something gets up to speed) is equal to the ratio of the force you apply to it, and of how great is its mass (how much physical matter it contains.) That is another basic, scientific physical law. It means that if you hit a relatively small golf ball smartly with a golf club, it takes off like the dickens because of a very high ratio of force to mass. But if you

hit a relatively large softball with a golf club, you are lucky to see it get off the ground because of a very low ratio of force to mass. You are more likely to break the head off your golf club. You need a fat softball club to really get it moving. This is a simple law that applies to most bodies in motion, unless you are shooting billiards. Then you need a similar law with a slightly different view of what force is, because it needs to predict what multiple bodies — like a bunch of pool balls — do when they are whacked, as in making a compound ball combination on a pool table, ending with a four bank shot into the side pocket. The principle involved, however, is the same as before.

Newton's conceptualization of these physical laws of motion is not complicated, but Einstein simplified them further (in 1915) by pointing out in his General Theory of Relativity that there is need for only one law of motion, Galileo's law of straight line inertia. This would predict what course a planet would take, for example, but only by taking into account the environment in which that planet was moving. The planet would interact with a geometrically curved space/ time cosmos, with the curvature of space around the mass of any object — the Sun for example — influencing the planet's course of motion, thus eliminating the need for a concept of a force of gravity drawing the planets into orbit around the Sun. This law holds for the Earth, as well as the Sun. When you fire a rifle into the air, for example, the bullet would travel in a straight line forever, except for air resistance slowing the bullet and the curvature of space around Earth steering the bullet back to the ground. Space satellites need to keep going at a high speed — eighteen thousand mph — in order to pass through the curvature of space around Earth to maintain their straight line inertial paths and reach the other planets.

If you see these fundamental laws of the universe as just descriptions of how things in the physical world interact with, and are greatly influenced by, their environment — how you walk, as well as what steers the stars, planets and space ships — you can also see that the simple, environmental laws of psychology given throughout this book, similarly describe how we operate. Each describes how our environment significantly interacts with us. These environmental laws of psychology steer our thinking in figuring out problems and their solutions. Let's now look at the conceptualization of a psychological, environmental law.

I and my old friend Joe — my teacher at San Diego State — at the last scientific meeting we attended together, sat in on a symposium where one of the speakers glibly referred to the "laws" of psychology. Always

a stickler for being correct when you wrap yourself in the mantle of science, Joe then asked the speaker, "Would you cite five of those laws of psychology you just referred to?" As the speaker spluttered, hemmed and hawed, Joe, holding up matching fingers, said: "Okay, three... No? Two? The speaker then apologized for speaking so loosely of the one psychological law which is generally accepted. It is as follows:

The Law Of Effect

Everything we do, or see others do, has a function and a payoff. All of our behavior, including our emotions and beliefs, is controlled by rewards or punishments.

This simple statement, given in various ways, has been known for the past 90 or more years as the **Law of Effect**, first called that by Edward Thorndike, a learning theorist and contemporary of Sigmund Freud. It's title is short for the **Law of Effect of Rewards and Punishments**. It has also been called the win-stay, lose-change, trial and error learning strategy, as well as the payoff principle.

The Law of Effect says nothing about the content of the environment but assumes that the environment is stable and somewhat restricted so that the payoff principle can have its effect. What is lacking in that simple payoff statement is an appreciation that the environment can and will change, radically modifying our behaviors and beliefs by radically biasing how rewards and punishments are allowed to work. Using the payoff principle to explain things, without taking into account what kind of restricted or expanded environment we are in, is about as smart (and realistic) as using mathematical principles to explain the perfect sailboat, but never taking into account the effect of wind, water and wave upon it, or the path of a space traveler without referring to the curvature of space around the stars and planets. Let's see what the payoff principle means when the state of the environment in which we are is taken into account.

Why hasn't psychology discovered more about how we function? Psychological experiments — only one part of the scientific method

Psychology, in its plus 100 year existence as a scientific discipline, has only generated this one general statement, the payoff principle. This is probably why — up to now — very little successful work has been

done on quickly resolving the psychological problems with which traditional talk psychotherapy has worked. The simple reason for this slow flow of results is that psychologists make limited use of the scientific method, which has three techniques; experimentation, naturalistic observation, and verification by repetition. The discipline of psychology had an inferiority complex early in its development. With experimentation, it tried to emulate the method of the hard sciences, like chemistry and physics, but in a very limited context. Aside from testing IQ, personality, and abnormality traits, it has concentrated on very limited things you can perform experiments on, aping chemistry and physics. In such limited experiments, it reduces its scope of study to something like white rat behavior in a drastically restricted payoff environment such as the inside of a Skinner box. There it investigates, under stimulus controlled (restricted payoff) conditions, how the rat will press the bar if you give it less and less food for more and more bar presses. In explaining this experimentation to Psych I students, Psych textbooks seem to always come up with the human analogy of playing slot machines in Las Vegas for more and more money with less and less payoffs, poorly paid piece work in labor union contracts and little else. Unfortunately, such laboratory experimentation doesn't even apply to the rat's behavior outside the Skinner box.

What is an Environmental Law of Behavior?

Psychology makes an assumption that what you get from a rat within a Skinner box, like what you get in physics and chemistry experiments, will be part of a much greater, general law. The problem with this reasoning is that psychology has not productively looked at much of anything that is greater or more general than what a white rat does in a Skinner box. It has not, scientifically, systematically and productively, studied phenomena like love, infidelity, family and group relations, in conjunction with the payoff principle.

The most obvious environmental law applying to things like successfully adapting to change, love, emotion, infidelity, behavior of groups, etc., has been staring psychologists right in the face ever since they started working with rats in restricted environments like a Skinner box. Such a psychological law is half rooted in drastically restricted payoff environments like the Skinner box, and its other half in the expanded, even chaotic, greater real life payoff environment all species experience. Like Newton and Einstein, psychologists could take an overall view of things

and make a simple statement that describes the interaction of all learning species with their environments, with no exceptions:

The Environmental Law Of Behavior

Environments change. The stability and longevity of behavior, emotions and beliefs are directly proportional to the degree of restriction of the payoffs in the environment. The unpredictability and instability of behavior, emotions and beliefs are directly proportional to the degree of expansion of the payoffs in the environment.

This Environmental Law of Behavior, as we can call it, like the laws formulated by Newton, is a basic, scientific law, only a psychological one. Also, as Newton's laws not only apply to walking, playing golf, pool and softball, but also to how the planets and stars interact, this psychological law has implications for us much more profound than simply determining whether our behavior will be unpredictable or stable. Just as Newton's laws apply to what we do everyday physically, this environmental law applies to what we do everyday psychologically and behaviorally. This statement's implications can be translated into sub-laws which tell us how a species like ours regulates itself, falls in love, deals with infidelity and so on. And of key importance, how our species even cripples itself with psychological problems.

What does this psychological law tell us that is of practical help? Unlike the Law of Effect it does spell out, for example, how to train a pigeon or a dog to do something. As you can observe yourself, before you can train a dog, you must first restrict its environment; you must reduce its payoff environment, at least temporarily, to next to zero, except for yourself and whatever rewards or punishments you dispense. You cannot train a dog in an expanded environment, one which is not stimulus controlled. An analogy to an extreme expansion of the environment would be you demonstrating how to train a dog to shake hands at a dog breeders convention. If, suddenly two dozen other dog trainers jump up on the stage with you and all, at the same time, try to train your dog to roll over, play dead, fetch, sit up and beg, as well as never to get up on beds, couches and chairs using food pellets, beef jerky, peanuts, cheese balls and shock prods, little training could occur in that confusion of an expanded payoff environment. As Fedor Dostoevski pointed out to us over a hundred years ago, *the only thing worse than absolute slavery is absolute freedom*, for absolute freedom leads to chaos. To effectively train

the dog, we need its absolute attention, free from all distractions and all other rewards and or punishments which we do not control. Restricting the dog's payoff environment to next to zero for training purposes is the dog's absolute slavery, and the extreme environment expansion of two dozen trainers as payoff sources is its absolute freedom and chaos. These opposing concepts can be thought of as a point on a continuum of environmental change, which moves in the direction of restriction or expansion. Of course, in normal situations, we are never at either extreme of the payoff environment but at some practical degree of restriction to avoid chaos. *Probably the subjective (personal) value assigned to each in the form of a ratio can be understood as a point.*

Naturalistic observation —

The other part of the scientific method

This simple statement of a general environmental law of behavior ~~law~~ is the result of the second part of the scientific method, naturalistic observation. Psychology has made little use of naturalistic observation aside from looking at the mating behaviors of birds and small fish to study instinctual behavior patterns. Other researchers have profitably observed the great apes in their natural habitat, but not yet Man. In this book, and its predecessor, *When I Say No, I Feel Guilty*, with the exception of a little experimental data, the material presented is the result of naturalistic observation of ordinary people, and the laws resulting from that general observation reflect a wide range of general behavior, emotions, and beliefs, including psychological problems. While laboratory experimentation may yield results that are more precise, naturalistic observation can lead to results that are more to the point, having practical relevance.

How can we tell what a scientific law is — Consensus?

With reference to the Environmental Law of Behavior, you may ask, "How do I know besides you saying so, that this is a scientific law? Any one can make up a bunch of words that sound scientific and intellectual." The answer to that question is that it meets the same two criteria which Newton's laws had to meet to be recognized as laws of science. First, a new law cannot contradict, but may expand, previously discovered laws which have been established by the same criteria. Second, it must match the data collected, or observed out in the real world it is supposed to describe. For the first part, this general psychological law describing behavior and the environment does not contradict the psychological payoff

principle, the Law of Effect, but expands it. As for the second part, this general law must fit the observations one can make about behavior in all sorts of restricted and expanded payoff environments. As we go through this chapter and book, you can decide yourself if the examples of observed behavior are predicted by the principle expressed in this law. Then, if you wish, you can make your own observations of behavior, emotion and belief in restricted versus expanded environments and see if it accurately predicts them, especially in your own life experience.

Yet, you may still ask if consensus is necessary for a scientific law to be discovered. The answer, of course, is that consensus has nothing to do with discovery of reality — ask Newton or Einstein if they needed it — but everything to do with deciding what we teach the next generation what we think we have discovered or not.

Your incredible psychological dependency upon your environment and the changes in it

Given an understanding of what we are dealing with in scientific law, and why, now let's see how naturalistic observation of the general interaction of ourselves with our environment, extends the Environmental Law of Behavior into five sub-laws, all based upon the principle of restricted versus expanded environmental payoffs; The environmental laws of restriction, of emotion, of expansion, of groups, and of beliefs. Each of these sub-laws predict how we normals behave, believe, emote, in all parts of life, including in our relationships, families, love affairs, how we cope with significant change poorly or well, and therefore predict how and why we get psychological problems, as well as how we can rid ourselves of them.

The first sub-law simply states that when your environment changes in the direction of being restricted, your sources of positive and negative payoffs will become limited.

One half of the Environmental Law of Behavior — Environmental restriction

The First Sub-Law: The Environmental Law of Payoff Restriction

The stability and probability of our behaviors, emotions and beliefs is directly proportional to how restricted our payoff environment is. Environmental restriction is the primary primitive, animalistic (fight

or flight) coping path for dealing with any significant negative to make behaviors, beliefs and emotions stable and predictable again.

When our environment is greatly restricted, with fewer competing payoffs, both positive and negative, our behaviors, emotions, and beliefs will become restricted, uniform, efficient, routine, less contradictory, directed only by those fewer payoffs in the restricted environment. Those payoffs within the restricted environment become high probability, and predictable, while any others become very low probability.

This sub-law, which describes the effect upon you of restricting your environment, has a lot of unappreciated implications. For instance, when the environment is restricted, negatives which bear upon our emotions can be eliminated as long as the restriction is maintained. This is why we withdraw from that part of our psychological environment which has changed (expanded) so what is left will again be restricted, causing a psychological problem we cannot resolve. Sort of an automatic psychological, "out of sight, out of mind" coping mechanism, usually with a "sour grapes" belief generated as an explanation for environmental withdrawal or restriction. Environmental payoff restriction is the psychological basis of our primitive animalistic coping analog of *Here Be Dragons*; i.e., Remove the Dragon or Remove Yourself.

Even though we will spend a significant amount of time on environmental restriction, this whole book still can only touch upon the enormous influence environmental restriction has upon us in our day by day lives, upon what we do, and upon what we sincerely believe about life and living it with other people. As I did in the first chapter, let me start by giving you a very simple example of the effect of environmental restriction upon us, the conditioning of a professor in his own classroom, and what the possibility of such an act implies for all of us. The implication that such an act is possible signifies that it is also possible to control much of our behavior, beliefs and especially our emotions through environmental restriction. Later on we shall see that clinical data collected from survivors of Korean prisoner of war camps argues convincingly that on a large scale, this both can be, and has been done.

So, let's first look at the simple act of controlling a professor's behavior in the classroom, then show how the same principle of environmental restriction used in brainwashing can control, restrict and suppress the behaviors of large numbers of people, including their emotions. Then getting back to ourselves, let me show you this same principle shaping your and my emotions; what happens when you or I fall in love, for example.

It also, unhappily, determines what happens when you find that your lover is unfaithful by biasing, as we shall see, your choice of options to the easiest, most maladaptive and psychologically childish in how to cope with loss of love; payoff restriction — again Remove The Dragon or Remove Yourself. After that, we can look, in general, at how we can cope better as a psychological adult with loss of love and other psychological problems by expanding our environment instead of restricting it. More on that later, but first, the simplest example of the effect of human environmental restriction.

Controlling another human's behavior by restricting his payoff environment.

Mel and I were undergraduates and graduate students together at San Diego State College. We met when we were paired off to work together as research assistants in the psychology department. Mel and I were a matched set in many ways, and in working with each other, we became good friends. We saw things eye to eye, because among other things, we had the same irreverent, silly sense of humor, and suffered fools badly. One of the major reasons Mel and I meshed so well together was that we both had the same type of dry emotional/intellectual response to all sorts of things which other people seemed to find either exciting or upsetting.

Mel and I were mavericks. We didn't automatically buy into what a lot of other people believed including our professors, and the discipline in which they were training us. We were especially unimpressed by the general sacred cow of academic science. When circumstance dictated we had no choice but to suffer academic trivia passed off as something valuable, we would come up with an idea on how to make lemonade out of the lemon presented us.

In a boring class on clinical theory, Mel and I tried to use our time more productively than yawning and dozing off as the rest of the class did. We wanted to test out a claim we heard through the grapevine; was it possible to condition a professor — through his non-thinking, midbrain action — to lecture only to certain parts of a class? Even without his knowledge, using simple social payoffs; a smile and a nod, for example?

For the rest of that first class, we counted the time the professor lectured to the left, center, or right of the lecture hall. He lectured to all places equally. During the rest of all the classes, Mel and I sat apart on opposite sides of the class. In the first half hour, Mel gave a smile and

nod each time the professor looked at his side of the room. I timed what the professor did. In the second half hour, we reversed our roles. I smiled and Mel counted. Within the hour, the professor's lecturing behavior changed completely. By the end of the first half hour, he lectured entirely to the side of the room where Mel was. By the end of the second half hour he was lecturing to the side of the room where I was. The data we collected on each successive class were identical, except that when one of us stopped smiling, it took the professor less and less time before he had changed over to lecturing to the opposite side of the hall.

In short, there was a happenstance restriction of the professor's psychological environment within that classroom because of the use of extremely boring lecture material and the students' lack of any positive reaction to it. Given that environmental restriction, Mel and I were able to control, at our whim, a small portion of a professor's behavior. And we did it in the same way we would have trained a dog to do a trick; restrict its environment and you can influence its behavior with whatever positives and negatives left in that environment.

The reason Mel and I were able to have such an impact on our professor's lecture behavior was because there was no competition for our simple payoff. All the rest of the students were bored silly, falling asleep, or with sullen looks and frowns on their faces. Our professor was getting no immediate positive payoff from the class for his behavior. He was in a very restricted social payoff environment. Mel's and my smiles stood out as pleasant oases in a vast, arid academic desert. Our professor's mid-brain oriented to them and was guided by them automatically, without his realizing it. There was no competition for his mid-brain's attention. If, on the other hand, his lecture series had been exciting and interesting, Mel and I would have had to jump up and wave each time he looked our way to have any real impact upon his automatic mid-brain. Everyone's face would have been animated and given our professor immediate social payoff no matter where he looked.

When the class was finally over, Mel and I talked about showing our professor his lecture data. Mel wanted to see our professor's reaction to the data and find out if he had any inkling that part of his behavior in class was being deliberately influenced by us to change without his being aware of it. I thought the professor would be a bit peeved when he found that two students were using him as an experimental subject without his knowledge. Mel sold me on his point with a wry observation: "Better he should find out now, if he doesn't already know, what could happen to

him teaching this turkey, when someone really good looking starts smiling at him. Like that blonde bimbo in the second row. He'll never know what hit him."

You have the free will to control your own behavior — But when you stop paying attention — Does your restricted environment again control you through your mid-brain?

So we showed the professor our data. He hadn't the slightest notion on what we had been doing. He was totally unaware that even a small portion of his behavior in a restricted environment could be so easily influenced by such a simple thing as a smile, especially without his knowing it. We had set up an automatic interaction between our professor and payoff sources in his environment, of which he was unaware, and which definitely controlled part of his behavior. This control was possible, of course, because he was unaware of it. In real life, we are mostly unaware of how we automatically interact with our environment. When we want to walk from the kitchen into the dining room, we don't have to think about how to do it. Our non-thinking mid-brain automatically guides each footstep of our journey, keeping us from bumping into walls, falling over children's toys, walking into chairs, until we get where we want to go. We don't have to think about this to do it. We can even do it while reading a newspaper.

So, if our professor had been aware of our little game of reinforcement, he could have paid attention to our manipulation and to where he was lecturing. He could have chosen to refuse to respond to our smiles and nods. But as he was concentrating on his lecture material and not us, the automatic effect of our reinforcements was in effect, and he was lecturing to whatever direction we rewarded.

Normally, your environment is not wide open. It does not have an infinite number of sources dispensing an infinite number of payoffs for an infinite number of behaviors, automatically prompted by an infinite number of beliefs. As a matter of practicality, we restrict our environment in many ways, simply for efficiency and to avoid being overwhelmed by the infinite variations in ways by which things can be done. However, the most efficient ways are also the most regimented ways, and regimentation produces the side effect of conditioned, rigid vision and beliefs, which do create difficulties in coping when personal change is mandated by the search for a solution to a psychological problem. For those of us

who are not yet psychological adults, rigidly restricted environments are preferred because lack of structure in an expanded environment makes us anxious. Structure is the rules on the proper way to do things. Consequently, the more anxious we are about lack of rules in our lives which tell us how to do everything, then the more restricted we attempt to make our own, as well as everyone else's environment. Environmental restriction, as we have seen, rules out the many different ways you can skin a cat, and permits the reinforcement of only one way, eventually seen as "the way" to do something.

What is a payoff?

How can we define the difference here? If there can be difference here?

The Environmental Law of Behavior tells us that all the payoffs, both positive and negative, out there in your environment can be thought of as in competition with one another for your attention. You are bombarded everyday of your life with payoffs for your behaviors; smiles from different people, cross words and obscene gestures from other drivers on the freeway, treats from friends, sexy looks from possible dates, sales bonuses, dirty looks from those who didn't get them, words of approval from parents and bosses, test scores from teachers, stony silences or door slamming from mates, even feeling productive and giving yourself a pat on the back for a good job done. Sometimes the most powerful positive payoffs you can receive are simple statements like; "I think you're right", or "That makes sense to me," in response to some idea, belief, or plan you share with someone else. Or the most powerful negative payoffs can range from an arched eyebrow to a sarcastic, "Get real."

Your brain, specifically the area known as the mid-brain, discussed later, will automatically shape your behaviors to get the maximum number of positives and the minimum number of negatives from your entire environment. Your behaviors are then prompted and regulated to conform with whatever is reinforced, positively or negatively, within your restricted psychological environment. This restriction insures that your behaviors will be efficient and productive wherever you go. For example, if you are a woman who likes to cook gourmet foods, you do so because it generates payoffs from a wide number of people. But, if your payoff sources change because your environment changes, your behavior — including your choice of food — can, and will change in a short time. For example, you meet a perfectly wonderful fellow (or gal) and you get a bit involved with him. Only he doesn't say anything about your osso buco, because he likes ribs, chili and beans. Given that situation,

the odds are that your osso buco recipe, though highly rewarded before, gathers dust in your recipe file because your total payoff environment has been restricted by your involvement with him. All the times you have been thanked from the heart by grateful connoisseurs for that dish mean nothing if you cook for him (or her) and he doesn't much care for it. That in a nutshell is the main effect of a restricted environment. You will only cook that dish again if you expand your food environment separately from your sociosexual partner to include your gourmet friends again. To understand how your behavior is regulated, substitute anything (politics, opinions, beliefs, fashion, sexual lifestyle) for cooking osso buco and the same influence of your restricted environment applies to that behavior too. There is a parallel between you getting emotionally involved, and Mel and I conditioning our professor. Both follow the same necessary condition; restriction of the psychological environment. You simply spend more time with your partner and therefore get more of your payoffs from him (or her) and less from everyone else. He (she) or anyone else you share a restricted environment with will influence you greatly. If he doesn't particularly like fancy foods, he will give you little or no positive payoff for them.

Falling in love —

One end result of environmental restriction

What happened with Mel and I and our professor follows exactly the same principle as getting involved with someone romantically. Not that he became emotionally involved with us, but he did become dependent upon us in a small way. As a result, I was astounded that my fears of him being ticked off at us were not justified. He was quite cordial and friendly, even a bit jolly about it all. This observation that he liked us, when, according to my own social belief programming, he had every right to be irked by what we had done, could be predicted from what the Environmental Law of Emotion tells us: when our environment is restricted, our emotions as well as our behavior and beliefs are effected by the specificity of our rewards and punishments within that environment. Our emotions conform to those specific positives and negatives within that restricted environment. If we get an inordinate amount of positives within that restricted environment, we are going to feel very good about the reinforcement source(s) in that restricted environment. This is irrespective of the wide variety, generality and amount of positives and

negatives outside that restricted environment which would change our emotions radically if we were exposed to them. In other words, without the restriction of our environment we could not become emotionally dependent and would not fall in love. We can state this as a law.

The Second Sub-Law: The Environmental Law of Emotion.

The bonding intensity and longevity of our positive emotions is directly related to how restricted our payoff environment is, and for how long. The intensity and multiplicity of our negative emotions is directly related to how expanded our payoff environment is. Environmental restriction is the primary, primitive, animalistic (fight or flight) coping for negative emotions produced by environmental expansion.

The Environmental Laws of Psychology also cover how our emotions are shaped and conditioned to fit our restricted environment. This sub-law, like the others, is derived from the implications of the Environmental Law of Behavior.

Emotions are shaped, like our behavior, according to how restricted our payoff environment is and the number of payoff sources within it. If we get our positive reinforcements from a wide variety of payoff sources within our environment (a relatively expanded one) our emotional reaction to these positive payoffs will be spread out and diffused over a wide range of payoff sources. If, however, our payoff environment becomes restricted with reinforcements coming from very few, or only one payoff source, our emotional reactions to these reinforcements will necessarily be concentrated and conditioned to those ~~that~~ few single payoff source(s).

This Environmental Law of Emotion describes, for example, how we fall in love. Usually, we love our family, at least certain members within it, because of the enormous number of positives we have shared with them since being an infant. During that period of growing up, we had been conditioned to associate positive emotions generated by the positive payoffs we experienced, especially in Mom's presence. This law of emotion makes such good common sense. If we experience lots of positives in the presence of another person, in a restricted payoff environment like childhood, we will come to love that person, or at least have very warm feeling for him or her.

Similarly, the same process describes how we fall in love with another person when we are older. Going to our example of getting involved

with a fellow (or gal) who likes ribs, chili and beans, the longer that relationship exists, and the more time you spend with him, as opposed to others, the more you restrict your psychological environment. Then he (or she) will probably become the greatest single source of reinforcements in your life. We will go into more detail on the factors which limit or increase these shared reinforcements later, but for now let's just look at the concept itself. If this long term restriction of payoffs happens, according to the Environmental Law of Emotion, you will become emotionally dependent upon him (or her). Optimally, the same thing happens to your partner. If you allow this to go on for any length of time, you will begin to describe your relationship as close, and eventually, as a love relationship. All this happens because you allowed an important part of your psychological environment to become restricted to him, or her, as the case may be.

You can also see examples of this environmental restriction phenomenon when trouble — that is, the environment expands with negatives — brews in a close relationship, either your own, or of friends and relatives. What does Uncle Louis do when Aunt Mabel gives him too much of a bad time? He copes by further restricting his marital environment, shutting out its emotional negatives by temporarily seeking positives elsewhere, going out with the boys, playing golf or poker, taking a fishing trip, visiting a hooker, etc. Aunt Mabel, does something similar when she gets too many negatives in her marital environment with Uncle Louis. She may visit her mother, go shopping all day Saturday, take a weekend trip to San Francisco, or have an affair with the pool boy.

What about sex as a reinforcer?

You might be saying to yourself that this sounds too simple to be a predictor of when love will occur. What about sexual attraction and sex itself? What role do these two factors play in determining love? If you think about it, you will answer these questions yourself. Sexual attraction and sex itself are reinforcements within that restricted environment we call a close relationship, just like all the other payoffs. When they are added to all the other positive payoffs, the total makes up the mid-brain emotional conditioning which we call love. As you know yourself, sex, by itself, has very little to do with relationship love, even though we politely call it by the same name. For sex to be part of relationship love, we need emphasize the relationship as primary, which is built up over time by sharing mutually restricted, environment payoffs.

Why does this emotional connection happen under these conditions as reliably as the sun rises and sets? I don't know. Probably because automatic behaviors are prompted by the mid-brain and that is also the seat of our emotional reactions to things in our environment. So, in a sense, when you fall in love and become emotionally dependent within a restricted psychological environment, the same thing happens to you as happened to our professor when Mel and I conditioned him to be selective to where he lectured within a restricted environment. He had become — as evidenced by his positive reaction to our confession — emotionally dependent, at a low level, upon us to provide him some positive reinforcement in that dreadfully restricted psychological environment of class. Not only did the restricted environment set up the control of his behavior, but also prompted some microlove towards Mel and I, the dispensers of reinforcement in one of his more restrictive environments.

As you can see from Mel's and my interaction with our professor, your payoff environment, from where, by whom and how many sources of payoffs you have, is important to you. Our class example is simple, but not trivial. Perhaps too simple to demonstrate how profound a factor restricting your payoff environment is to your well being, happiness, attitudes, viewpoints, even in your politics, as well as in playing a major part in being self-reliant or dependent.

A more complex and compelling example is the phenomenon of brainwashing. Let's look at what can happen when your psychological payoff environment is severely restricted, such as by brainwashing procedures. Then given what we learn from that clinical data, we can make some sense out of many things. Among them, the end result of a relationship which becomes very restricted; your getting hurt by being much too emotionally dependent upon your mate in a love match, i.e., not yet being a psychological adult.

Long term restriction of our payoff environment — What does it do to us?

We have looked at short term environmental restriction examples of training a dog, or conditioning a professor. But what we haven't looked at is what happens to us when we are exposed to long term environmental restriction. How does such long term psychological payoff restriction affect our lives and our flexibility when, for instance, we have to deal with an expanding environment that causes a psychological problem? Let's

start to answer that question by examining a real life example of the most restrictive social payoff environment in which you or I could exist, and what effect we know it could have on us. An environment about which we have a lot of hard clinical data collected by U.S. Military psychiatrists and psychologists; that of the Korean War Prisoner of War Camps in the 1950's, where psychological conditions were deliberately set up primarily to control American POWs' behavior with a minimum of North Korean military assets, and secondarily, to make the reinforcement of political belief change possible. First of all, let's look at what happened to turn what was an army into a disorganized, every man for himself, rabble when these brainwashing procedures were used upon the POWs.

The devastating effects upon American GIs of the brainwashing procedures used by Chinese Communist instructors in Korean War prison camps

Brainwashing procedures used in the Korean POW camps, the U.S. Army tells us, resulted in the loss, for over seven thousand GIs, of any semblance of civilized mores and military rules in those POW camps. It resulted in one out of every four GIs informing upon fellow American prisoners to Chinese communist "instructors." It resulted in attitudes that fostered one third of the GIs believing that it was okay to collaborate with the enemy, like writing anti-U.S. propaganda. It resulted in the deaths of over thirty-eight percent (38%) of the American POWs when they got ill and none of the other GIs gave a damn enough to take the trouble to care for them; the highest death rate for POWs in the history of the U.S. military services. The results of these brainwashing procedures shocked the American people and military services when they were reported.

It was politically easier, then, to write off these devastating results upon American GIs in Korean prison camps as due to "brain washing", implying with that label that the outcome was the effect of some irresistible, mysterious, sinister, communist, Pavlovian practice, spawned in prison laboratories and dungeons in Moscow or Peking, which no one could do anything about. We are able to see today, that brainwashing procedures can be put in perspective as a practical, if inhumane and barbaric, application of the Environmental Laws of Psychology. Instead of seeing it as something mysterious, it will help, I think, to compare it with a straightforward, applied psychological discipline, Human Engineering.

In this comparison, the perception of brainwashing as an involuntary, Pavlovian conditioning procedure can be disregarded as yellow journalism nonsense and a realistic assessment of brainwashing can be made.

Brainwashing does produce rapid, astounding, even shocking, and to the uninformed observer, totally unpredicted, changes in normal human beings. Once we see the connection between it and the Environmental Law of Behavior, we can then look at how the same procedures used in brainwashing — in watered down form — set up how we experience and regulate our lives. Especially the psychological trouble we get into because we always seem to find it easier to restrict our environment when things happen which we don't like, than to expand it. To set a basis for where we want to go with this extension of brainwashing procedures, let me quickly tell you how I learned about Human Engineering, what it is, and how close it parallels brainwashing.

After I got out of the army, I went back to school at San Diego State. Human Engineering was the class in which, I think, I learned more that was important than in any other psychology class. The class was not on how to engineer a human, but on taking a skeptical, no assumptions, look at how pilots wreck their planes, bulldozers run amok, drivers wreck their cars, air traffic controllers direct jetliners into each other, even how typists flub the material they transcribe. Human engineering finds out why humans who operate machines mess things up; how the design of the machine can increase the probability of the operator having an accident or do the opposite.

The professor teaching the course was my old friend Joe. Joe, as you may recall from some other things I've written, in addition to teaching us, gave us maxims like; "If you haven't had problems, you haven't lived much yet." Joe was an environmental psychologist then and he still is today. He used to say, "If you think you and your behaviors are so self-determined, tell me, how long would you keep talking to me if every time you opened your mouth, I ignored you? I'm part of your environment, and I have influence on your behavior by what I do in response to it."

Human engineering — Restricting a cockpit environment in order to eliminate mistakes and plane crashes

The previous alternative to human engineering was called the assessment of pilot error, blaming the effects of poorly engineered airplanes each time something went bad on the human factor; pilot imperfection.

Human engineering, on the other hand, took the position that if lots of pilots crashed in a particular airplane, because the landing flap handle was close to the landing gear handle and the pilots kept mixing them up, that airplane was poorly designed, human engineering wise. Joe pointed to the very practical notion given by human engineering that you will have a lot more effect in making things better if you rearrange (restrict) the pilot's environment (separate the different handles) instead of concentrating upon retraining the pilot to be a better flyer. This approach is basically restricting the environment of the pilot to increase the probability that he or she will do what you want, instead of something else prompted by stimuli you have no control over. If you separate the handles so far apart that no pilot will ever again mistake them for one another, you have restricted the possibility of pilot error, by restricting the pilot's possible behaviors, by restricting the pilot's environment. You would have pared down the number of behaviors with which the pilot could respond to that environment by one; mixing up the two handles. The theoretical ultimate in human engineering would be to restrict the variation or complexity in the pilot's environment to such simplicity that no error would be possible. The pilot (or anyone else) could only do things correctly (the particular way you want things done.) Looked at this way environmental restriction can be seen as environmental simplification, or as we soon shall see, in brainwashing, as environmental oversimplification. This concept is another major point in understanding the Environmental Laws; especially how they apply to how we are most usually taught in school to perceive things around us and being taught just to believe instead of learning to think. More on this after we dissect brainwashing.

Brainwashing — Political human engineering

To illustrate this behavioral, environmental approach of viewing things, Joe made us look at the practice of brainwashing. Now you might think that was a very strange subject to study in the redesign of airplanes and other machines to make them safer, but it was not. Brainwashing, basically, is about environmental control, and is based upon the same approach and principles used in Human Engineering. Human Engineering, in fact, would be more accurately labeled if it were called Human Environment Engineering.

As is often the case in studying things, a side issue becomes more important than the original subject studied. I worked in Human Engineering before getting my doctorate, yet, the study of brainwashing and what

happened in Korean War POW camps nagged at me, becoming more and more pressing over the next twenty-five years. I knew intuitively by its simplicity and its dramatic results, even if it was barbaric, that brainwashing held the key to understanding a lot of basic human behavior. Especially stable, predictable behavior, and how it could unexpectedly, and very rapidly, change into something radically different. So, to understand how the gross procedures used in brainwashing are only a magnification of the less obvious conditions regulating our everyday lives, let's first look at the specific procedures used by the Chinese communist camp administrators to restrict the POWs payoff environment, thereby effectively controlling their behavior and beliefs. We can then see how these same conditions are obvious in our everyday life, once we know what to look for. The Chinese administrators used three major techniques to restrict, as much as possible, the psychological payoff environment of the POWs down to the level of a dog who is to learn a trick:

- 1) Remove any POW who tried to show other POWs that what the Chinese instructors were saying about political issues concerning the Korean War, or anything else, was just slanted indoctrination coming from a Chinese communist soldier;

- 2) Prompt and reward POWs to inform upon any other POW, destroying any mutual trust, communication and social feedback—payoff between them, thereby isolating them from each other;

- 3) Isolate each POW from any positives from home by censoring all POW mail, passing on bad news but withholding letters with statements supportive or reinforcing of the POW's normal perception of himself and his social system.

In brief, that short summary gives you the basis of brainwashing in the Korean prison camps. But, I want to give you a description of what happened which is as close as possible to the clinical data collected from the POWs themselves, so as to let you see for yourself how close the Korean War brainwashers followed the Environmental Laws of Psychology when they drastically restricted the POWs' payoff environment.

To control what people do and believe — Restrict the environment in which they live or work, as necessary, just as human engineering does, or brainwashing procedures

The procedures used for controlling individuals by the Chinese Army instructors on American and other allied POWs during the Korean War in

the early 1950's are identical to the approach used in Human Engineering to help pilots fly; simplify the environment as much as necessary to minimize the pilot's mistakes translates directly into restrict the environment as much as necessary to restrict the person's behavior and beliefs. In human engineering, you do this by restricting the behavioral choices of the pilot; keep his control handles so far apart that he can't possibly mistake one for the other; restrict his environment so that he has little choice but to do things "correctly." One way this restriction of the environment is done in brainwashing is to get rid of any loose cannons; eliminate anyone from the environment in which you want your brainwashing to work; a) who questions the beliefs you want every one to have, b) who might question the worth of what you are saying, c) over whom you have no control, and d) to whom others might listen.

Brainwashing — Restrict your environment by getting rid of those who disagree with you

It is important to note that these soldiers were not the bottom of the manpower barrel. They were like your neighbor's boy or your own nephew, or son, or your father or brother. They were a cross section of males in American society of the 1950's. In short, brainwashing worked its effects upon normal, average people whom you find anywhere. How did brainwashing work on them? First, any POW who showed independence of thought or leadership (social influence/reinforcement) over other POWs was removed and sent to special, highly guarded and physically controlled, "incurable" camps and no further attempts were made to brainwash him. Amazingly, the Chinese communist instructors found it was only necessary to remove five percent of the POWs for showing any independence of thought or leadership tendencies towards other prisoners. These POWs were the social reinforcement dispensers in the normal army environment who really influenced the other GI's behavior and beliefs, just like Mel and I influenced our clinical professor to lecture to where there was a social payoff. These POWs, labeled uncontrollable "poisonous individuals," would, matter of factly, influence and reinforce other POWs in ways not approved by the Chinese communist political instructors. The other amazing thing about this "independence/leadership" removal in Korea was that it did not follow military rank lines. Many of those removed for "poisonous individualism" were privates. Most officers and noncoms never showed any social influence

whatsoever towards other POWs.

Brainwashing — Restrict the environment by prompting and rewarding informers

In the Korean POW camps, the Chinese instructors also rewarded POWs with extra food or cigarettes for informing upon one another. This was first for things like not making one's bed or sweeping the barracks floor. That seemed just a matter of good sense to keep the place clean and conditions healthy. But when the POW grew used to informing upon others for extra food, he was required to obtain other information, like poor attitudes, resistance, or escape plans. The POWs did not become informers for their captors because they were starved. They were fed the same rations issued to their North Korean Army guards. The informed upon POW was never punished, just told that he had misbehaved and his fellow POWs had informed upon him. Consequently, the informer was not beaten up, or drowned in the latrine, as happened in WWII. None of the informers in the Korean War was retaliated upon because no one was hurt because of what they said. Therefore, informing upon one another for extra food or cigarettes flourished. Proven informers among the Korean POWs were one in ten. The U.S. Army's estimate of actual informers was one in four. Consequently, each POW trusted no one else with his private thoughts or ideas, and POWs stopped speaking to each other because you could never tell who was an informer for the Chinese. With this procedure of reinforcing informants, the Chinese communist camp administrators very effectively, socially isolated each POW from every other POW. Consequently, each POW was in a extremely restricted social payoff/feedback environment, very much like the one described before used to train a dog to respond only in the "correct" ways.

Brainwashing — Restrict the environment by cutting the person off from all usual, normal, environmental influence

The POWs were physically isolated in prison camps in Korea. But their payoff environment, even with the two other major restrictions of removing social leaders and prompting POWs to inform upon one another, was not totally restricted. The POWs received mail from home. Therefore the camp administrators censored every piece of mail sent to them. This was to isolate the POWs from any external influence upon

their behavior or beliefs. Any letter that contained reassurances like, "Everything is okay back home," or "Everyone is praying for your safe return," was confiscated. If a Dear John letter was sent, however, the POW received it. Repossession notices from collection agencies were received shortly after being mailed from the U.S. This, along with the method of prompted and rewarded informing, allowed the Chinese Army instructors to drastically isolate each POW from one another — restrict their environment — and isolate them from any other social reinforcements than their own. Any of these other reinforcement sources would likely contradict their own political viewpoints, and propaganda in which they wanted to indoctrinate the POWs. These Korean and Chinese viewpoints were usually presented over and over and over in classroom discussions resembling the graduate school seminar format, as well as in one on one graduate school tutoring sessions. Among the beliefs told to POWs, again and again, with no opposing voices heard, was that it was impossible to escape, so the POW shouldn't waste his time trying.

This psychological control system worked so well that not one POW escaped during the entire Korean War. The vast majority of POWs did not try. This in spite of the fact that these POWs were in camps that had no barbed wire fences, no guard dogs, and no machine gun towers with searchlights. The camps were usually attached to a Korean village to which the POWs had free access. There was a guard to POW ratio as low as one guard to every seventy POWs. This astounding fact meant that approximately, only one hundred (100) North Korean soldiers were necessary to guard and control about seven thousand American GIs during the entire Korean War. What was most astounding was that all this dramatic behavioral change was accomplished without any deliberate, authorized, physical maltreatment or torture, at least for U.S. Army POWs.*

The results of the brainwashing procedure, particularly the social isolation through informing technique were long lasting. After repatriation to Japan, placed in hospitals for check-ups and rehabilitation, few, if any of the former POWs were observed to speak to any other POW, but they would converse at length with anyone else. Years later at V.A. Hospitals, follow-ups found some ex-POWs who still would not have anything

* Footnote

Air Force POWs in a different Korean prison camp system were deliberately, systematically abused, tortured and maltreated to obtain forced "confessions" of alleged war crimes.

to do with other ex- POWs.

In short, from the above observations of surviving prisoners on what happened to them in the POW camps, it is clear that the brainwashing procedures all hinged upon restricting the POW's environment to eliminate all uncontrolled — unapproved — sources of reinforcement, much as you would restrict a dog's environment so you could train or condition it to do a trick, like shaking hands, rolling over, or sitting up to beg.

One final observation about the results of the brainwashing procedures used in Korea. Twenty-one of the POWs who survived their incarceration in prison camps there opted to take their army discharges in North Korea so they could go to China. These GIs were labeled as turn-coats; the ultimate result of having one's brain washed. That these POWs elected to go to China does not appear to make any sense. After all, they could have come back to America, received all their back pay and a disability pension for life, and then gone to China, by hook or by crook, if they wanted to. What is missing in this political equation is the emotional factor. As we have seen earlier, if you are in a very restricted relationship with someone for a period of time, you will become, to some degree, emotionally dependent upon that person, simply because he is the only source of social reinforcement you have.

We see this same phenomenon based upon a very restricted social payoff environment causing problems for some psychoanalysts' patients in Manhattan during the August vacation season. Because of extreme emotional dependency, some psychoanalytic patients are driven to distraction by being unable to have free access to their analysts. Emotional over-dependency only comes about because of a relationship or environment that is too restrictive, wherein the only reinforcements are from sources within that restricted environment. This observation based upon the Environmental Law of Emotion gives us an almost certain answer to why twenty-one American GIs chose to go to China. It wasn't that they wanted to stay in Korea, or even go to China. As would be predicted by the Environmental Law of Emotions, they had become extremely emotionally over-dependent upon their Chinese Communist instructors. The only thing that makes sense is they didn't want to leave their Chinese instructors; probably the only persons ever, who bothered to pay any close attention to them, and positively reinforced their beliefs and behaviors.

It is now forty-five years later. Even to think of retribution on behalf of those GIs who suffered or died in Korean prison camps is futile. But if there were only one small bit of justice in this world, I would like to

think that those twenty-one POWs who chose to remain in Korea, were as emotionally dependent upon their Chinese Army instructors as are today's analysis patients in Manhattan upon their analysts. If so, I would devoutly hope, that every night, for the next twenty years, all twenty-one ex-POWs called up their Chinese instructors at three o'clock in the morning, complaining that they were insecure, and asking what should they do about it.

What does brainwashing tell us about traditional talk therapy?

The lesson we can learn from the experiences and reactions of over seven thousand American GIs subjected to brainwashing procedures in Korean POW camps is a simple one, but illuminates how our lives are structured by our payoff environment. The POW's experience in Korea clearly points out that behavior, as well as belief, are controlled by restricting someone's psychological environment. If you maintain that restriction of his or her environment, the person will not change. Let me play devil's advocate and give you a shocking conclusion that can be drawn about traditional talk psychotherapy because of what it does and how it does it. You can draw this conclusion from information we already have, and what the Environmental Laws of Psychology tell us about environmental restriction and expansion, emotion, and psychological problems.

It is instructive to compare what happens with traditional talk psychotherapy and behavioral methods. Traditional talk therapy in Manhattan and Beverly Hills can take five years before client and shrink agree that they have accomplished what they set out to do, or agree psychotherapy will not help. Behavioral methods, on the other hand, show results within weeks, not months or years. If the behavioral technique does not work, you find that out very quickly. That's why I call behavior modification the psychological penicillin. With this quick response to behavior therapy, you can use a variety of different behavior techniques in a short period of time until you find one that does work and resolve the problem.

There is a most significant difference between behaviorism and traditional talk psychotherapy. Behavior therapy requires the client to expand his or her psychological environment; to begin the process of becoming a psychological adult. Traditional talk psychotherapy does not. Behaviorism requires the client to reenter the psychological environment from

which he or she has fled — to cease Remove Yourself from the Dragon coping. Behaviorism requires the client to learn how to cope within that environment, be it a feared airplane, a negative social situation, or an anxiety producing sexual dysfunction. Traditional talk psychotherapy does not require this of its clients. If, indeed, one can observe that the most efficient and rapid method to resolve a psychological problem is to expand the client's psychological environment in the area of the problem, then simply because of the inordinate amount of time taken by talk therapy using its own method, one must conclude that traditional talk psychotherapy does not require, or does not possess the sophistication that would allow its clients to expand their psychological environment, otherwise the presenting problem would resolve itself. Because of a) the client's strong emotional ties to the therapist commonly seen in traditional talk psychotherapy, along with b) the Environmental Law of Emotion pointing out that only severe restriction of the psychological payoff environment produces such emotional dependency, therefore, one can also argue, that c) not only does traditional talk therapy not expand its clients environment, but very likely restricts it. As stated at the beginning of this chapter and throughout the rest of this book, restriction of the psychological environment causes the psychological problem to become chronic, while expansion of the environment resolves it. Observation of these reliable and easily seen factors allows an argument and conclusion, based upon these observations, that traditional talk psychotherapy does little to resolve the problem, but does something which keeps the client's psychological environment restricted. This shocking conclusion, therefore, means that traditional talk psychotherapy can easily become part of the psychological problem, and not its solution. The answer to this dilemma, of course, is to modify traditional talk psychotherapy by melding it with behaviorism — to expand the client's environment, as pointed out herein.

This same phenomenon of intense emotional dependency caused by a very restricted environment also tells us what probably happened in an emotional bonding phenomenon called the Stockholm Syndrome, and also in other situations such as terrorist skyjackings and in political kidnappings such as Patty Hearst experienced. Some thirty plus years ago, a group of terrorists locked themselves and their hostages in a bank vault in Stockholm, Sweden. After only three days in the vault, all the hostages supported the terrorists' views and at least one of the woman hostages wanted to marry one of the terrorists. In Korean War prison camps, the

emotional dependency had at least months, if not years, of environmental restriction in which to develop. In Stockholm, evidently, the intense emotional dependency developed within seventy-two hours. You and I, judging from our own experiences, would look at that short time outcome and label it crazy. Yet, we were not there in that very restricted payoff environment and did not undergo that to which the hostages were subjected. Conditions in that very restricted environment would produce a great reduction in anxiety if it became clear that the terrorists would not shoot you if you agreed with them; a major reinforcement. Also, rapid, major emotional change is not unknown. There has been seen no faster major change in emotion than reported in behavior therapy studies, wherein people with a lifetime fear of high places, for example were emotionally desensitized within ten minutes, or lost a lifetime fear of flying in twenty minutes.

If brainwashing works, and it does, then it must operate according to the same psychological law, based upon our nervous system, which regulates whatever else we do

Now what does all this clinical data collected from Korean POWs forty-five years ago tell us about ourselves today? It says if we are able to be brainwashed, then brainwashing must follow the same process — only more extreme — by which we change our behaviors and beliefs ourselves. We don't have two different nervous systems, one of which allows us to be brainwashed, and the other for our regular life. So, the same psychological laws which determine how we live normally also determine how brainwashing works, when taken to extremes. If brainwashing works because it is really the effect of drastically restricting one's environment, just as we do to train a dog, then the procedures (restriction) which make brainwashing work must be only a magnification of those already present in a less extreme way, in our present, everyday lives — which we should be able to observe once we know what to look for.

Using the psychological principle of environmental restriction to train someone — just as we do to train a dog and just as brainwashing does — is the primary basis for acculturation and elementary teaching in our society. I say elementary schooling instead of education because elementary schooling is not education, but mostly training and social indoctrination. When we train children to salute the flag and recite the Pledge of Allegiance, we do it by rote indoctrination. We do not explain that

such demonstrations of patriotic nationalism are used to in order to bind together diverse factions in our population with patriotic ritual. We also don't educate our children by telling them that in many countries of the world, including our own, patriotic ritual is also looked upon with amusement or even disdain, where patriotism or wrapping oneself in the flag is seen as the last refuge of a scoundrel.

Indoctrination — by restricting the payoff environment — instead of education is not limited to obvious things like what a good citizen should be, but is used even in mathematics. There we can see environmental restriction used to oversimplify training of (instead of educating) children to get them to use only one (decimal) out of many possible (binary, octal, etc.) mathematical number systems. While this example may sound like petty carping, it is not. Mathematically educating a child — as opposed to mathematically indoctrinating — would propose to the child that, while there are many number systems, most people use only one for convenience. Mathematically educating a child would propose that while we will teach you only this number system now, you may learn the others later if you are interested, especially when you learn about how computers operate. Educating a child like this does not lend itself to indoctrination resulting in the perception that there is only one correct, approved way to think of and use numbers. Most importantly, such a broad educated perspective does not reinforce the typical gestalt end viewpoint of indoctrination through environment restriction; *the world — even the numbers in it — is ordered, has pre-determined, fixed and approved ways by which things must operate*. Such a gestalt indoctrination does not lend itself to any self-help cause with a premise of: “When I have a problem, I know there is more than one way to skin any cat, so I, myself, will have to change whatever I think needs changing to fix things.” So, given the way our culture has trained us, before you can choose your best new way to skin a cat, it is worth recognizing that you have very likely been indoctrinated in the most benign way, in restricted environments since childhood, to believe that there is only one cat and only one way to skin it.

You can observe this unilateral type of social indoctrination to cause severe emotional problems and conflict between parent and child. For example, this indoctrination — rather than social education and acculturation — can occur when a mother restricts a young girl's environment to mostly Mom's viewpoint on what is “correct”, i.e., “Should you ever have pets? — No!; Should you ever trust men? — No!; Do you always

have to control everything? — Yes!” This type of indoctrinal upbringing in a very restricted environment of just Mom and daughter, where Mom is the only reinforcement source, has the same effect as any other long term restricted environment, including brainwashing. It typically results in emotional over-dependency as in any other overly restricted social relationship, and retards any development towards psychological adulthood. It also results in daughter firmly believing what Mom has indoctrinated her in with respect to pets, men or control, only to find out in later life that what Mom insisted upon twenty years ago was not the wisdom of the ages, but only Mom's personal preferences; even her psychological problems. This childhood indoctrination is easily avoided by bringing other women into the child's acculturation process. This could be other female family members who would counter balance any idiosyncratic biases of Mom. The other women don't necessarily have to be family, but can be neighbors, friends, etc., who can give the young child other viewpoints than Mom's to consider.

No matter how well intentioned our training and indoctrination (even through graduate school) has been, this type of observation tells us if we wish to understand our behaviors and beliefs in order to change them, including our psychological problems, then we must understand how environmental restriction alters our very perception of ourselves, our lives and the environment in which we live. More of this phenomenon of training and social indoctrination being mistaken for education later.

Primitive Coping — Remove The Dragon

Restrict your environment by getting rid of those who disagree with you, or say, or do something you don't like

What does the study of brainwashing procedures tell us about the operation of the Environmental Law of Behavior in human affairs? The answer is quite simple, profound and almost universal in the choices we are likely to make when confronted with things we don't like. Because of the primitive coping style — *Here Be Dragons* coping — we see modeled around us everyday of our lives, if we encounter significant negatives, we are very likely to restrict that part of our environment wherein the negatives lie. If someone brings problems, negatives, even something we don't like, into our environment, we are very likely to restrict that part of our environment by eliminating that person from our environment. Let me give you a case in point. Some months before writing this chapter I

watched a national TV program about cochlea implants, a new marvel of the computer age. This procedure allowed a deaf child, with the aid of a special microchip surgically implanted behind her ear, to learn to hear and speak normally without having to use sign language in order to communicate with other people. You and I, assuming we have normal hearing, would be amazed and happy for the young girl because of what the cochlea implant would allow her to do; learn to hear and speak like most of us do and lead a regular life. I was shocked to hear the spokeswoman for the association of deaf people who use sign language state her viewpoint. She claimed the cochlea implant was totally unnecessary and her association was going to sponsor legal means to outlaw it so no more deaf children would receive it. Her justification for her point of view? She stated that being deaf and using sign language is just as "normal" as having the ability to hear. To you and I this viewpoint sounds strange, simply because if we had the choice to be deaf and use sign language or to have the ability to hear, we would always pick the latter. The claim of the spokeswoman for the deaf association sounds bizarre and cruel. It makes no sense until we realize that the deaf population who sign are in a very restricted environment. At the end of their schooling, seventy-five percent of them cannot read the daily newspaper, and the vast majority cannot lip read any better than you or I or the man in the street. Therefore, the face to face human payoffs, feedback, opinions, viewpoints, about deafness which they receive, are from other signers, most of whom are also deaf.

Knowing the effect of what happened in Korean prison camps, I have absolutely no doubt that the belief that being deaf and signing is just as good as hearing is sincere, and in that restricted deaf environment, necessary to lead as normal a life as possible. I also have no doubt that these sincere people have formed strong emotional dependencies within the restricted environment of the deaf and know the development of the cochlea implant will toll out the death knell for signing. If cochlea implants do what they promise in allowing children to learn to hear, then the deaf signing community, eventually, will have fewer and fewer new members, less and less public money and support, and eventually die out.

I am not surprised that cochlea implants as an environment change present psychological as well as practical problems for the traditional deaf community. I am also not surprised that they automatically, as all of us are like to do with an environmental change that uncovers personal and environmental negatives, opt to restrict their environment by trying

to ban the cochlea implant — a *Here Be Dragons* reaction with a Remove The Dragon response. This change, the cochlea implant, is an expansion of the payoff environment; the cause of our psychological problems.

I want also to emphasize this phenomenon of automatically using the many ways you can restrict an environment to cope with strong negatives does not apply only to unsophisticated, uneducated, Appalachian miners, or to unsophisticated 19th century women like Anna "O", or to those deaf signers who really need that mid-brain belief that being deaf and signing is the same as having normal hearing. This Dragons coping mechanism — eliminating environmental negatives by restricting that part of the environment which has expanded — applies to all of us who have not yet recognized it as a maladaptive coping method; even sophisticated, knowledgeable professors of psychology automatically use it without thinking things through first. Let me tell you what happened with two professors when I unintentionally caused them a psychological problem.

After I took my masters at San Diego State, I spent the next year working at the Navy Electronics Laboratories at Point Loma before I was told by the old boy network in psychology to report in the fall to UCLA where I had been enrolled as a graduate student. Each of us that first year took a daily professional seminar which would qualify us to remain at UCLA and continue our studies. In one seminar, an internationally known professor handed out copies of his latest theoretical journal article. He had just mailed it for publication to *Psychometrika*, a very prestigious journal. I quickly scanned it, and saw something wrong. After class, I waited for the professor in the hall and diplomatically pointed out to him that he had made a major error in his statistical procedure and analysis. Snatching his article back from me, he walked away towards his office. He then wired the journal editor to ask him to return the proposed article because of "clerical errors." This professor was one out of less than a half-dozen experts in the world on the subject of the paper. The journal editors may very well have unquestionably published anything he sent them. I probably had saved him from a major professional embarrassment. A month later this professor showed up at my place at midnight, in his cups, saying I was "a millstone around his neck dragging him down." Furthermore, he had arranged, he said, through the same old boy network, to get me removed from the psychology department and transferred to the University of Tennessee. I fed him some coffee, drove him home and told him to think about it when he sobered up.

In hindsight one can see I had created a psychological problem for him. His professional payoff environment reinforced a set of beliefs which were necessary for him (and most professors) to operate within that abnormally restricted environment called academia. Not all of us have the patience and fortitude of a saint and can use the reinforcement of research work itself to reward us. Therefore, he had to believe that what he was doing was important; so much as to put in very long and tedious hours developing something which would advance scientific knowledge. Second, he had to believe that very few others could do what he did; he was a world class expert, and if just anybody could do what he did, it wouldn't be worth doing. My psychological thoughtlessness — the pointing out of his errors by a first year graduate student, one not even accepted to work on a Ph.D. yet — blew his protective mid-brain beliefs about himself out of the water. If a first year graduate student can just casually glance at ones latest article submitted to *Psychometrika*, and correct its errors on the spot, how important can be that article, and at what level of sophistication is its author operating? Because of my lowly status at the time, the answers to these questions, unfortunately, were personal negatives, making me an environmental negative with which that professor would rather not have to deal. The primitive *Here Be Dragons* coping response allowed him only two options — physically remove the dragon from his environment, or physically remove himself from the environment of the dragon. He did have the coping option of psychologically removing the dragon, or psychologically removing himself, but he would have to move into the realm of either denial, delusion or hysteria to do either. As he was a bit more sophisticated than Anna “O,” that ruled out those options. Since the department Chair wouldn't buy his idea of exiling me to Tennessee, he approximated re-restricting his academic payoff environment to its old state by arranging for me to teach instead of working near him.

During my second year in grad school at UCLA, something similar happened. I was asked to write the lead chapter in a prestigious methodology and instrumentation book with the other chapters coming from nationally recognized experts from around the country writing about their own particular specialties. While I was writing my chapter, another professor I was working with told me with great pride that he had been asked to review a chapter from another contributor. I congratulated him over my typewriter as I was writing mine. When he found out later that I was writing the lead chapter, he first tried to get me removed from the list

of authors, and when that didn't work, he formally tried to get me booted out of graduate school. That Remove the Dragon coping response didn't work for him. He was formally told to get back to teaching and research and keep his nose out of other's business.

You might dismiss these professors with a wave of the hand thinking they were technological idiots unable to relate to other humans effectively or behaving like spoiled, irrational brats. But they were not brats or technological idiots. They were also not psychopaths trying to do in a hapless student. I wasn't as naive as some, for neither could they have my head nor my departure. These professors, sadly, were only perceiving things, like the rest of us, according to the mid-brain preprogramming within their very restricted academic payoff environment. This programming was a perception required for them to stay within that very lonely, competitive, unforgiving and punishing environment and yet be effective. Seeing a reminder of their realistic negative limitations for years after, namely me, would not, according to their professorial beliefs, do. I didn't leave, but shortly afterwards, sadly, one transferred to a different campus — the Remove Yourself from the Dragon option, while the other resorted to a personal psychological withdrawal; he didn't speak to me during the next thirty years before he passed away. Both these examples of using primitive *Here Be Dragons* coping point out that one does not have to employ the bizarre or strange withdrawal responses cited in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* in coping with a psychological problem to distort and make one's life messy.

In seeing these examples of very primitive, emotional, non-thinking coping, do not think them in character with UCLA Psychology of that time. They weren't. Those who knew kept their patience, since I could handle things myself and did. Hence, no fuss was made, and rightly so. Never-the-less, you should know those in the department I had the privilege to associate and work with then and now, rank with the best psychology has ever seen.

The key to cults and military academies — Environmental restriction

Since cults produce the same bizarre, unbelievable behaviors as did Korean War brainwashing, and since we have only one nervous system, it is reasonable to assume that somewhat the same procedures are responsible for producing the observable results of both. This assumption, in

fact, is very accurate. Both brainwashing and cultism are produced by severe environmental restriction. The reported rules set up by typical cults for their members closely resemble the procedures of brainwashing in Korean POW camps. First, the cult always sets up where its members are physically isolated from friends, extended family, acquaintances, etc., who can influence their behavior, or give at least contrary opinions to the cult leaders. Second, if couples or entire families join the cult, they are broken up and do not live as parent-child or husband-wife. Third, if the members leave the cult compound to do something, such as beg for money from the public, they never go alone, but in a group. This is done so all can report on any of their group who breaks the rules, such as disappearing for a while to meet other people who are not members of the cult, or engaging in forbidden conversations with outsiders. In short, the cults set up the same social isolation from others in the cult, wherein no one member has someone whom he or she can trust — even in private — to be honest and straightforward about what goes on in the cult.

The military academies of the federal government also have employed some of the same control through environmental restriction procedures used in cults and in Korean War POW brainwashing; physical isolation, required informing disguised as part of an "honor" code, and little time for interaction with family or friends except on special days. All of these procedures isolate the student from the influence of others not controlled by the academy's staff and administration, as well as from other students in the academy itself, just as in cults and POW brainwashing prison camps. The cadets and middies don't even get the summer off like other college students, but are sent to special military camps and projects where they again have a low chance to encounter "outsiders" who would give opinions contradictory to those fostered or approved by the academies, such as a flat emotional challenge, "Are you so simple you buy that lame crap they are feeding you?" Such a message given only once, by someone who is a bit older, more experienced, and has obviously been around the block a few times, could seriously impair, if not destroy, the academy's entire military indoctrination program for the cadet.

Is political correctness linked to brainwashing?

The environmental law of behavior, which can predict and account for brainwashing, also helps us reinterpret and understand what we see happening in contemporary social conflict. For example, procedures similar to brainwashing used to restrict the campus payoff environment

can be observed today in universities under the concept of political correctness (PC). Those who use political correctness as the reason for cessation of debate in demanding conformity on an issue because it is supposedly settled, reject the notion of classical philosophy that enduring questions are never answered. It appears the PC advocates do not consider the educated person competent to handle an expanded stimulus/payoff environment, one with a plethora of negatives. In so doing, the PC advocates re-restrict the general payoff environment of the student body after it has been expanded for them by dissenting opinion, following one of the principles of propaganda laid out by Dr. Paul Joseph Goebbels, the Nazi Minister of Propaganda during Germany's Third Reich. Goebbels pointed out that if you cannot discredit what a person says, then discredit the person for those with whom you speak by labeling the person who doesn't agree with you, for example, a Communist, or nowadays, a Sexist or a Racist. With this negative labeling of dissent, the PC advocates psychologically remove the dissenter as effectively as the Chinese Army instructors of the Korean War prison camps physically restricted those who publicly disagreed with their arguments. This method of eliminating dissent, however has not been limited solely to Nazis, Communists and Ultra-Liberals. Conservatives also have been historically observed trying to restrict the general payoff environment from dissent using negative labels to be avoided, such as "outside agitator, communist sympathizer" or "fellow traveler."

As the examples given to this point literally shout out, the primitive coping responses illustrated by the *Here Be Dragons* analogy of either Remove The Dragon or Remove Yourself from the Dragon can be seen in our history from recent to ancient times, in politics, government, education, schooling, throughout all human experience, if one only knows what to look for and how to interpret it.

Rethinking the obvious

As the evidence around us suggests, the Environmental Law of Behavior is a patent rethinking of the obvious. Such rethinking or reinterpretation need not be only an academic exercise, but an expansion of our understanding. A different interpretation of the obvious about the interaction of the learning species, especially humans, with their psychological environment has been presented in this chapter. As von Szent-Gyorgyi reminds us, "*Discovery consists of seeing what everybody has seen and thinking what nobody has thought.*" The real worth of that

viewpoint is not that it is about something new. Its worth is in systematically seeing well known, seemingly unrelated phenomena in a different way, allowing alternate prediction of these and other phenomena not previously handled very productively, including the psychological problem.

What comes next?

The point of this book is to resolve psychological problems and the way to do that is in inverted order of their etiology, or the reverse sequence in which they develop. Following this common sense procedure, before you can deal with a problem, you first have to stop denying you have one. Therefore, let's go to the next chapter, wherein we can first look at the nitty-gritty, real life ways we deny, rationalize, and/or withdraw from our environment to restrict it; especially those ways which make us look like we are not doing this, and which we may not really be aware of. After that, we can begin to look at the alternative to environmental restriction, i.e., environmental expansion and the resolution of the psychological problem..

Chapter Three

The Coping Option Principle Remove the Dragon, Remove Yourself, Defang the Dragon, Learn to live with Dragons

There are none so blind, as those that will not see, nor deaf, as will not hear
Matthew Henry

A few years ago, the night after Thanksgiving, I was asked to speak to a group of Adult Children Of Alcoholics. They were meeting over the Thanksgiving holiday in a conference to learn more about alcoholism/substance abuse and its treatment. Why they picked Thanksgiving for their conference, I don't know. About half the group were people with an alcohol problem themselves. They were not very thankful for the talk I gave, because I talked about the hardest thing anyone has to cope with; personal denial, rationalization and withdrawal. I didn't pull any punches and told it as my professional and personal experiences saw it.

What are the causes of alcoholism? No one knows for sure, but one theory, backed up by repeated clinical observation, is that the typical alcoholic person has difficulty dealing with other people when any conflict arises, tends to either get hostile and violent, or gives in, and as an alternative to these two negative choices, withdraws by drinking to excess. And the longer one is subject to alcoholism, the more complicated the analysis of the cause(s) of drinking becomes.

This chapter is about denial, not alcoholism or substance abuse. The express purpose of this chapter is to talk about the first thing you have to do before you can resolve a psychological problem; admit you have one. The only reason I talk about alcoholism and substance abuse is that substance abusers are noted for denying they have a problem. If it did not provide such a good example of denial, I wouldn't touch alcoholism with a professional ten foot pole. Alcoholism treatment and research is an area replete with controversy, antagonism, contradiction, incompetence, questionable ethics and theory, malpractice, turf wars, even fraudulent research and cover ups. It is not an area filled with happy campers and collegiality. Unhappily, one can further note that if you are an alcoholic, it is more likely that you will suffer brain damage and/or die from liver

failure than be cured by professional treatment. Given this background and caveat, let's look at denial and the very good example of it which substance abuse provides.

Second only to fourteen-year-old teenagers, alcohol/substance abusers are known as the most excessive and chronic users of denial, rationalization, and/or withdrawal seen in any setting, let alone a clinical one. Their use of Remove The Dragon or Remove Yourself from the Dragon coping is formidable. If you doubt this, visit any Alcoholic Anonymous meeting and listen to the novice attendee a) swear that he or she is not an alcoholic, or b) argue that he or she can stop drinking at any time, or c) give the multitude of reasons why he or she fell off the wagon last week.

As chief of the Psychiatric Emergency Treatment Team in Long Beach for seven years, I learned that if you have a short time to get your message across to an alcoholic, you forgo diplomacy for being bluntly direct. I told my audience at the COA meeting I wanted to do two things; teach them some of the skills of being assertive, which could help them lessen the probability of some of the things known to increase chronic drinking behavior patterns, and point out some of the denials, rationalizations, and withdrawals used by alcoholics to avoid facing their problems. I started out with calling on them to recognize denial, in themselves and others, as something else besides a river in Egypt.

The reason I started with denial is that it is the first of four coping options cited by The Coping Option Principle, the first two of which cause problems, and the last two of which resolve problems. Let's look at the overall principle with its four coping options, and then come back to denial in this context of alcoholism.

Denial And Withdrawal Equals A Problem —Thinking And Environmental Expansion Equals Problem Resolution

The Coping Option Principle

There are four ways to cope with a potential or actual psychological problem, the first two of which are maladaptive making the psychological problem into a permanent one. The second two will prevent a psychological problem from taking hold, or resolve it after it has.

1. Remove the Dragon

- A. Physically by getting rid of those or that which give(s) you negatives.
This coping option restricts your environment, and will affect quality

of life.

- B. Psychologically by denial that there has been a change in the payoff environment which causes trouble — “that’s not a Dragon but a pussy cat” — or with rationalization that there is a reason things have to be the way they are now — “all pussy cats have six inch fangs and claws — nothing to worry about.” This coping option restricts your environment, does not always work, is not long lasting.

2. Remove Yourself

- A. Physically by withdrawal/avoidance from the changed part of the payoff environment. This coping option restricts your environment, but will affect quality of life.
- B. Psychologically by hysterical conversion, delusion, etc. This coping option severely restricts your environment and drastically affects quality of life.

3. Defang the Dragon

- A. Physically rejoining or staying within the troubled, expanded payoff environment (adaptation will automatically follow.) This coping option expands your environment, and extinguishes response to negatives.
- B. Psychologically accepting (by desensitization) and dealing with environmental and personal negatives revealed by changes in that environment. This coping option expands your environment by eliminating negatives and emotional disturbance.

4. Learn to live with Dragons (psychologically)

Attaining personal, cognitive insight on maladaptive beliefs which misdirect us, or simply learning how to think instead of believe to deal with life’s constant unpredictables and unknowns. This coping option expands your environment and increases probability of problem prevention.

Coping options 1 and or 2 transform a potential problem into a real one. Coping options 3 and or 4 resolve a psychological problem.* These four coping options are how we, as a species, cope with problems. The first two, including denial and withdrawal are the human equivalent of animal fight/flight — what everyone usually does when faced with the

*** Footnote**

The Coping Option Principle is a synthesis of the operation of The Environmental Laws Of Restriction, Expansion, and Beliefs. The later two are detailed here and in Chapter Ten on thinking vs. believing.

components of a problem which must have a solution, but which we can't find. There is also a second classical coping mode inherited from our human ancestors; Critical thinking/verbal problem solving.

The critical options — Coping positively through adapting to an expanded psychological environment — Or changing what you believe

The final two coping options can be thought of as a human coping response, one of confrontation of the problem negatives and uncertainties in contrast to our psychological flight responses of denial, rationalization and withdrawal. This human coping response is what we tell a frightened little boy with a bloody nose who runs to us for comfort and assurance to do; "Get back in there and this time use your head and learn how to play the game without getting a bloody nose." In teaching a child to do this, we are teaching him — or her — how to be a psychological adult.

In fact, girls who are tomboys learn much the same ability in coping as boys who are forced to stay within many rough and tumble situations. Clinical research shows such tomboys have significant less occurrences of psychological problems or aspects of such problems like depression, because they have learned not to avoid troubled environments, but to stay in them until problems are resolved. These final two options of the above listing, reversing the withdrawal option and going back into the troubled payoff environment, and learning how to think instead of believe, is what we have gone through when we resolve a psychological problem.

The latter two options grossly resemble behavioral and talk therapy respectively. Let me point out, however, that psychology did not invent these two options by developing behavior therapy and talk psychotherapy. Fortunately, these two human options were around long before we even had a concept called psychology. These last two options were not invented — they just are, just as the first two, denial and withdrawal exist because we humans — and our animal ancestors through fight or flight — have always used them.

When at first we try to cope with trouble, negatives, heartache, death and dying, as a psychological child, we automatically, without thinking, use the human equivalent of the flight of our animal ancestors; environmental payoff restriction. When we mature to our full species potential granted by our DNA as a thinking, psychological adult, we adapt to an

expanded environment full of negatives by remaining in their presence. Doing this, we extinguish our emotional reactions to them, allowing us to deal effectively with anything in that expanded environment, stand our ground, and cope with life's complexities in a civilized and adult manner.

It takes little effort to see why denial and withdrawal are listed before the other human coping options. Without denial and withdrawal, there is no psychological problem to solve by the latter two. Denial and withdrawal are part and parcel of the more primitive *Here Be Dragons* coping response, which is the most significant part of the psychological problem. The rest of this book is about how to stand your ground in an expanded environment with its negatives. The next six chapters concern option 3, learning how to be a psychological adult by remaining within the expanded environment until all its negatives are adapted to. The final chapter deals with option 4, another part of learning to be a psychological adult by learning how to think in place of believing.

Given now that you know why we will do things in a particular way when we try to cope with a psychological problem, let's look in some detail at these options, starting with denial, particularly those denials used by substance abusers.

Remove The Dragon and/or Remove Yourself — Denial, rationalization, and/or withdrawal

A very common rationalization and denial of the existence of a drinking problem by many drinkers is to say "I like the taste of the stuff." I pointed out to the drinkers that Thanksgiving weekend, that although I dearly love the taste of orange juice, that doesn't make me sit around all afternoon guzzling a quart of it. Amazingly, as we shall see shortly from data collected on substance abuse by the U.S. Army, that excuse is a substitute for the real reason substances are abused: "I use it because I don't want to feel bad, and I usually don't feel good about myself doing lots of things in life." That is, of course, the rationale for teaching substance abusers to be more assertive so they can up their percentage of winning social conflicts, thereby giving them some things to feel good about, as well as desensitizing them to personal negatives at the same time. These are the same negatives that make them lose respect for themselves, i.e., part of the reason for drinking to excess in the first place.

Another, more recent rationalization, that seems to have either come out of poor psychotherapy practice, or telling a client what he or she

wants to hear, is the notion of co-dependency. With this rationalization, in a relationship where one partner is an alcoholic, both partners are supposedly excessively dependent upon one another, and this influences the drinking. I pointed out to the audience that in my experience of treating and hospitalizing hundreds of alcoholics, I saw a consistent pattern. While one partner was always excessively dependent, bailing the drinker out of his or her problems, the other was typically an independent S.O.B. Half the audience cheered this observation and the other half booed. I think you can guess which half did which.

Another rationalization — The myth of involuntary chemical substance addiction

A third, and most destructive and misleading rationalization for substance abuse is the idea of addiction. I said to this audience, of whom half were looking for a way out of their problems by pointing a finger at someone or something else, that the notion of addiction itself was on very shaky scientific ground. We usually think of addiction as something that takes control of things out of your own hands, i.e., you are “addicted” and have no choice but to continue to take some substance because “chemically,” you cannot do without it.

A study done by the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War seriously questioned the usefulness of this notion and the general idea of addiction being a realistic phenomenon. GIs in Vietnam were reportedly taking large doses of cheap heroin supplied by the Viet Cong to turn them into “drug addicts” and thereby eliminate them as a military force. The GIs were taking the heroin, they reported, to withdraw from the many negatives the U.S. Army presented them within their tour in that country. For that claim to make sense you have to realize that the Vietnam War was, in many ways, uncharacteristic of most of the wars fought by the U.S. Army. Vietnam was the only war in which the U. S. Army did not have the political support of its own troops. It was the only war in which more than one mutiny at the company level occurred; over sixty took place during the Vietnam War. It was the only war in which privates frequently murdered sergeants by tossing a fragmentation grenade into their bunker or tent while they were sleeping.

The army wanted to collect follow up data on what happened to these GIs who used heroin. They randomly tested and observed thirty percent of each shipment of GIs returning to the U.S. The army found that forty

percent of returning GIs had been using enough heroin and/or opium to classify them as heavy drug users and twenty percent as "addicts" according to conventional clinical standards. The researchers were amazed to find, however, that ninety percent of the tested GIs withdrew from the effects of long term heroin use with little or no classical withdrawal side effects by going "cold turkey." Most of them shook off the effects of their heroin use within three days to a week, and were "normal" in all significant ways after that; most importantly, they felt no compulsion to continue taking heroin or opium.

The only interpretation of the data of this large scale study of GI narcotic use that makes any sense is that you only become addicted if you voluntarily choose to chronically continue to take drugs; which doesn't sound at all like the classical idea of chemical addiction, i.e., you have no choice in the matter. For the ninety percent who used heroin to block out the transitory effects of being subject to U.S. Army negatives in Vietnam (the major reason given), as soon as their Vietnam duty was over — once they came home, there was seen no need to use heroin, hence little or no chemical "addiction" to get over.

There is a direct parallel to this Vietnam GI use of heroin, and its outcome, in regular medicine. Surgeons, in fact, have consistently reported for decades that morphine, a heroin derivative narcotic, is not addictive to the vast majority of surgical patients who require large doses for pain over a period of time. These patients don't become addicted because they do not want to be addicted. That was also my personal experience in receiving morphine for an emergency appendectomy at nineteen. When I was recovering, the shots of morphine put me on cloud nine, and killed all pain. Before I was given the morphine, I sincerely wanted some one to shoot me — thereby putting me out of my misery because of the unbearable, wracking pain appendicitis causes. On heavy doses of morphine for over a week, around the clock, I felt no pain, but I was still in touch with reality. I worried then about how to pay my medical bill, even while chemically oblivious to the terrible physical shape I was in. I didn't want or need morphine to make me feel good because I already did not feel bad about who I was and the things I did. When the pain stopped, I stopped using morphine with no withdrawal problems.

What can you become "addicted" to — Egg noodles?

For that small number of patients who became addicted to morphine, pharmacologists developed chemically "non-addictive" pain killing drugs

like Demerol. The same small percentage of patients who became addicted to morphine became “addicted” to non-addictive Demerol. They became “addicted” because they wanted to feel good about themselves, but this time using a supposed, chemically non-addictive drug. This is about as psychological a motive as you can get. A patient, like the Vietnam GIs, becomes chemically addicted to a drug, or not, depending upon the result he wants out of it. An old friend and research psychiatrist, Dr. Arnie Mandel, in speaking to my Psych I class at UCLA, pointed out that since the concept of addiction was so poorly thought out, a grossly obese patient — who got that way from overeating American Brand Egg Noodles — could be accurately described as addicted to them. So much for the usefulness of the notion of chemically driven addictions.

What does this tell us about the cause and treatment of substance abuse?

This US Army (and surgical) data tells us several significant things about the reasons for substance use — and abuse. First, the vast majority of us who use substances use them to deal with environmental negatives which we have no control over, such as physical trauma, tragic loss, physical pain, etc. As the environment changes with the lessening of environmental negatives, so does the use of chemical means for dealing with those negatives.

Next, accounting for the second group of us who become “drug dependent” according to classical clinical standards using the concept of “addiction” is very iffy. The traditional “addiction” label does not stick well to them, nor is it necessary to understand or treat their substance abuse. It is hard, if not impossible to argue biochemically, some people will become drug dependent and others won’t, based solely upon why they took up use of drugs in the first place, i.e., that their intent determines their biochemical condition. Arguing without any evidence that the “addicts” (the 10% of GI’s who kept using drugs) are physiologically different from the large majority who do not “addict” is about as sophisticated and helpful as using “The Devil made me do it,” as an explanation for one’s behavior. Instead of looking for differences between the two groups that account for differences in their substance abuse behavior, it is more productive to look at their similarities — what is common to both that produces the substance abuse? And what, when removed, would eliminate the appearance of “addiction?”

The one theory that not only makes sense, but also usefully points to a possible treatment is that the ten percent of GI's who become long term "addicts" use substances to deal with the same psychological factors as the "non-addictive" group; i.e., negatives. But for the "addictive" group, their personal and environmental negatives do not change. The "addicts" cope with these unchanging negatives by using drugs or alcohol to make themselves feel good. The control that determines "addiction" is not internal but external — those things out there in the environment we can't cope with that cause us negatives. Because of these unchanging, personal negatives, these "addictive" users don't feel very good about their accomplishments in life, or about themselves. They want to feel good about themselves but don't know how to deal with their negatives besides denying them or chemically drowning them with alcohol or drugs.

This explanation means that the ten percent of GIs who were supposedly chemically "addicted" to heroin and felt they needed drugs were those who wanted to use heroin to feel better about themselves — more than to block out the negatives which the U.S. Army inflicted upon them, the reason given by the majority for taking drugs in Vietnam. Follow up research showed that the apparent "addicts" were doing the same thing in civilian life before Viet Nam when substances were available to them. It is also very likely that they would continue to be at risk for abusing substances after they left Viet Nam and the army because they brought their unchanging personal/environmental negatives along with them into the army and would take them right back with them into civilian life.

The relationship between variables here that predicts so called "addiction" is analogous to control of the Superego, observed by Freud, and mistakenly postulated to be within the psyche, but in reality, is always controlled by the payoffs in the external environment. Traditional researchers in alcoholism and substance abuse today can not believe that the payoff environment controls such important behaviors as drinking and abstinence, no more than Freud could believe that the 1890 Vienna social environment controlled the Superego. This very same relationship between person and environment controlling the Superego determines whether or not a person is at risk for substance abuse, i.e., can the person rid himself of the personal and environmental negatives which prompt him to drink or abuse substances? If the negatives can be eliminated, then he or she will not "appear" to be substance dependent or "addicted." If they cannot be eliminated, then he will chronically continue to be prompted by these negatives to resort to chemical means to cope and

“appear” to be “addicted.” And, for drinkers, on top of all this psychological withdrawal disguised as “addiction” is laid the typical result of long term alcoholism; unfortunate brain damage, physical pathology and hepatic failure.

I was asked to talk to the COA because after a patient is medically detoxified and recovers from alcohol poisoning, assertiveness training is seen by many treatment professionals and lay counselors as a great part of the psychological treatment of choice for factors which increase the probability of chronic drinking and substance abuse behavior patterns. They see the most effective treatment as that which specifically addresses psychological problem(s) which increase the likelihood of excessive drinking (a fancy withdrawal mechanism.) Will assertiveness help the substance abuser? Yes, but only if the patient decides he or she wants to abstain, and uses assertiveness to deal with situations that prompt substance use, as well as desensitizing those personal negatives which increased the likelihood of using substances as a withdrawal mechanism in the first place.

This picture of substance abusers, therefore, makes a case that they can be treated as if they have a Type II psychological problem, wherein they have difficulty establishing realistic standards for themselves with respect to life's negatives in the changing areas of their life, as well as if they also have a Type I psychological problem, one wherein they have difficulty in dealing with parental figures (substance abusing peers) who are able to easily manipulate them into continuing their maladaptive drinking behaviors. It turns out, both theoretically and empirically, that Systematic Assertiveness Training is a treatment modality for substance abusers since it contains methods for dealing with and extinguishing the emotional reaction to personal negatives as well as methods for teaching social skills to deal with peers who verbally manipulate them into continuing to use substances. It is not surprising, therefore, on an empirical basis, Systematic Assertiveness Training has become part of the standard treatment of choice, nationwide, for substance abuse. Hence, my invitation to speak to the conference on Children of Alcoholics over that Thanksgiving weekend.

Unfortunately, when I pointed out these data and conclusions to the spouses and the alcoholics in my audience, some heard only what they wanted to hear; they, or their spouses, were addicted and had no choice in the matter and were not responsible for their own behavior. One said, "I can see what you say about involuntary addiction being suspect, but

what about my husband's addictive personality?" That's when I quoted Matthew Henry's still astute perception of how we restrict our environments to what we want to see and want to hear: "There are none so blind, as those that will not see, nor deaf, as will not hear."

It may seem that I am picking on substance abusers, but I am not. I am pointing out that they can be the most difficult clients to give therapy to because of their excessive and resistant tendency to deny, rationalize, and withdraw. When I was chief of the psychiatric emergency treatment team, I often consulted with Dr. Vicki Fox, the medical internist in charge of the alcohol detox and recovery program at L.A. County hospital in Long Beach. She pointed out to me that because of refusal of medical treatment until no other choice was practical, and the difficulty in getting people with alcoholic problems to look at their daily life operation in psychotherapy, the treatment cost was enormous. Vicki did an analysis of this enormous cost to L.A. County government in dollars and cents. To place that cost in perspective, Dr. Fox argued that L.A. County could buy the HMS Queen Mary — the ocean liner, now a tourist attraction in Long Beach harbor — refurbish it, and put it on a continuous round the world cruise as an alternative to hospital treatment and alcohol preventative therapy. If all the people in L. A. with alcohol problems were put aboard the Queen for a never ending world cruise, and provided with continuous, free wine, women and song, it would cost the county less than their alcoholic recovery programs.

Alcoholism, I think, is among the toughest, if not the toughest nut to crack. The reason for this is the typical alcoholic's chronic use of fancy denial, withdrawal, and rationalization based upon their chronic need to compensate for lack of good feelings about themselves and what they do in life, in addition to the negative complications — of both body and brain — which alcoholism itself fosters upon them.

What is denial? Or rationalization?

Denial and withdrawal can take many forms. One way we do either is quite straightforward and simple. Just deny it ever happened, or walk away from the problem. However as clever humans with the dominant brain on this planet — we often do things fancy; i.e., what we do doesn't look like denial or withdrawal at all. Rationalization is the most common fancy denial, such as, a jilted lover saying, "I'm not worried. He gets crazy and just needs to sow some wild oats now and then. He will be back." Another denial of a psychological problem is to play the victim,

such as, "They always pick on me. I do nothing to deserve it. What can I do?" When one is chronically playing the victim, one cannot deal with one's own personal negatives which preclude one from coping with a difficult situation. These are fancy ways of using the primitive *Here Be Dragons* coping response.

Another hidden denial method is to get angry instead of dealing with the problem at hand. When you are angry, you cannot be anxious over things that are negative within your environment or about yourself. For example, in a charity home which I helped set up for street kids, the staff and I agreed that we would reinforce a 1950's concept of motivation and morality as one simple model for the resident girls to use to make their life easier, so they could get on the program. We would later introduce advanced motivation and situational ethics when the girls had their lives settled down and they could handle its complications. Consequently, we put lots of rules and structure in place for the girls to follow and stay out of trouble while they prepared for their future life in college or on the job. This set of rules made very clear to them that we valued hard work, straight thinking, ambition, and motivation to improve one's life.

One girl had such fears of the future — when she would be on her own in six months — that she refused to let us help her, and withdrew from her immediate environmental surround. She avoided facing her future fears and psychological problem by being chronically hostile to all the staff and the other girls. As you will see in later chapters, we can desensitize you to any fear — we can defang the dragon — even a fear of what may happen in the future, if you let us. If you compensate for your fears by chronically withdrawing from them by becoming angry, even nasty, for example, to everyone else, your psychological problem will remain your psychological problem. As much as we tried over her last six months with us, she would not let us help her. She would always get angry, really angry, cursing any attempt to help her deal with the negative reality of her future. Being in group therapy with her was like being at a sailor's bar, or a horse trooper's convention.

She also diverted us from concentrating on her problem deliberately by being disrespectful and disruptive. Our 1950's teenage morality program was, to her, a set of rules to be deliberately broken, one by one, and then back again making sure she hadn't missed anything. You see, if we were constantly reprimanding and consequencing her for breaking the rules, she could stay angry at us for days and weeks on end. This was fancy denial using anger and generating it much like deliberately hitting

your head against a brick wall until your vision blurs to avoid having to looking over it and seeing what was coming your way.

We had a difficult choice during the last six weeks of her stay before she graduated from high school. Because she would verbally attack the staff who called her on infractions, should we discharge her, even thought that choice would likely mess up her life for a long time? She would likely never go back to finish high school. Or should we take her off the motivation and morality program altogether and see if that would ease the conflict so she could at least remain and graduate from high school? As it turned out, we took her off the program, let her stay the last six weeks, and she did make it through graduation. She left with her psychological problem intact, but also left with a big scholarship to go to college, if she wanted to. At last report, she was only dipping her toe in higher academic waters to see if it suited her. You see, you are helpless to aid someone, even as a professional, if they do not want to be helped, or refuse to look at their problem using fancy denial and rationalization. As the old joke says; "How many psychologists does it take to change a light bulb? Only one. But the light bulb has to want to change."

This teenager's situation also points out something that needs to be made very clear. If you develop a psychological problem, that does not mean it necessarily cripples you and you cannot be successful in the future. All it means is that you are going to be miserable in one part of your life until circumstance prompts you to abandon your *Here Be Dragons* coping, and resolves your problem. In her case, she would eventually come in touch with her future fears and negatives along with their resolution, and only a matter of time separated her from them. Once back in the expanded environment where the dragons are, you are faced with becoming a psychological adult, whether you want to, or not.

A rule of thumb to recognize denial — Pointing a finger at someone else

We could continue in this vein and make an infinitesimal list of fancy denials you can observe in yourself and other people. It is simpler to use the rule of thumb of denial. Denial usually involves the person with a problem pointing a finger at someone or something else, instead of at him or herself and that person's own unmet responsibilities. Often you see finger pointing combined with anger and rationalization, i.e., "If you had only given me a chance to begin with, I wouldn't have ..."

What is withdrawal?

Withdrawal can also be so fancy that it does not look like withdrawal from a payoff environment containing too many negatives. As pointed out in Chapter One, conversion hysteria was used to withdraw years ago, but we don't see much of it anymore with the inclusion in our culture of psychological concepts as general knowledge. However, one current fancy environmental withdrawal is excessive sleeping, a hallmark of chronic depression. If you don't get out of bed, you don't have to deal with negatives either. Worrying is another fancy withdrawal mechanism. Only the worrier does not worry about real things, like the negatives in a psychological problem, but about trivia that don't amount to a hill of beans anyway. If you are constantly worrying about nothing, you don't have to deal with the real negatives in your life. Again, as with denial, there is an inexhaustible list of fancy withdrawals. The acid test of a suspected withdrawal, however is if it keeps you out of the negative payoff environment where the dragons are.

What causes withdrawal — Removing Yourself?

When our payoff environment expands and produces and reveals environmental and or personal negatives, we typically feel there is an answer to our dilemma because our indoctrinated belief says there has to be one. But, if we find no adequate way to deal with these negatives through trial and error, and cannot change our behavioral belief preprogramming, we will automatically be reinforced by coping through gradual withdrawal from the troubled situation. This coping will consist of restricting the changed environment, by more and more denial and or mental avoidance of, or physical or psychological withdrawal from, the expanded environment's negatives.

Learning To Live With Dragons —

The other half of the environmental law of behavior — Environmental expansion

As mentioned in before, just as an initial expansion of the problem environment means no psychological problem or a problem coped with, an expanded environment that is followed by a restricted environment (leaving psychologically or physically) can mean a chronic psychological problem which will not go away on its own. Dealing with the negatives,

personal and environmental, in an expanded environment is one of the keys to both resolving and preventing a psychological problem. Learning how to cope well in an expanded environment having a dramatic increase in negatives as well as positives is a significant part of being educated — psychologically sophisticated enough to live with the Dragons instead of fearing and avoiding them — becoming a psychological adult.

As pointed out previously, the most common restricted environment we are likely to see is a love relationship, wherein we get most of our significant payoffs from, or in the company of our partner in that relationship. If we get almost all of our payoffs from, or in the company of, our partner, we likely will become dreadfully emotionally over-dependent upon that relationship. Or if we have a belief saying we should get almost all of our payoffs from, or in the company of our partner, we set ourselves up, as has been aptly called by feminists, as a love junkie. We can look at this phenomenon in more detail in Chapter Ten on beliefs.

We need to examine what happens when you are happily in love in your restricted sociosexual payoff environment and this environment suddenly expands. Then you realize *Here Be Dragons* is marked upon your personal environmental map. You start receiving all sorts of unpredictable payoffs, mostly negative ones. For example, you may find out your lover is unfaithful. Immediately your conception of him likely expands to include previously low probability negatives such as bastard, schmuck, or pond scum, as well as untrustworthy, no good, lying, S.O.B., etc. On the other hand, your description of your self may begin to use words such as idiot, naive, moony, soppy, foolish, over-trusting, dim wit, etc. We could say your psychological environment has been expanded to include a host of previously unforeseen, low probability negatives.

There is, unfortunately, no guarantee your environment is likely to be stable and unchanging (restricted) with a stable set of positives and negatives for any long period of time. Your environment can expand explosively, and become very unstable, as the following sub-law, derived from the implications of The Environmental Law Of Behavior, points out.

The third sub-law —

The Environmental Law Of Payoff Expansion

The variety and instability of our behaviors is directly proportional to the expansion of our payoff environment. The primary, human (problem solving) coping path for dealing with expansion of negative payoffs is cortical thinking in place of mid-brain automaticity.

This sub-law has two direct observables we should take note of: 1) Payoffs and payoff sources which were very low probability in a restricted environment increase their probability of influencing our behavior in an expanded environment. Routine behaviors, therefore, can become unstable, with incompatible, competing ones being reinforced in the same situation by different sources.

2) Beliefs, being preprogramming behavioral guidelines for a stable, restricted environment, increase their probability of malfunction in an expanded one. In short, we stick with the old belief even though it no longer applies to the present situation in the expanded environment.

Environmental restriction is always associated with coping through animalistic mid-brain operation and routine behaviors that are very efficient. Environment expansion is always associated with higher cortical functioning — thinking — which is absolutely necessary in that non-routine, unpredictable situation. Routine, learned behavior patterns do not work in expanded environments where things have changed, often radically. That's when our inherited human survival abilities — verbal problem solving and thinking — function best and usually save the day.

The primary, primitive coping option, handed down from our animal ancestors, is to avoid environmental expansion, keep away from the dragons. The primary adult human coping option is to be able to deal with, adapt to, handle, etc., any aspect of an expanded payoff environment, learning to live with dragons. These two brief statements describe the coping of the psychological child vs. the psychological adult, respectively. The way to cope as a psychological adult operating within an expanded environment is simple. All you have to do is think rather than believe, deny or withdraw. Again, I have described something as simple, which doesn't automatically mean it is easy. Many people have trouble with thinking in place of believing, and instead use the human equivalent of fight or flight — denial, rationalization, and withdrawal. The next six chapters are exclusively devoted to teach you to think in a most unusual way; experientially. In these chapters, you are exposed to an expanded payoff environment having quite a few environmental and personal negatives. Your practical way out of the difficulty caused by the negatives within an expanded psychological environment is not fight or flight (denial, rationalization or withdrawal), but educated human coping — learning to think in the face of repeated negatives thrown at you. In these chapters, you learn to be your own ultimate judge of your superego — the supervisor of your thinking, beliefs, behavior, and emotions. In short,

Defang The Dragon in everything you do that generates negative emotions. In so doing, you also learn to be a psychological adult in charge of his or her beliefs, especially the superego. When that happens you Learn To Live With Dragons. In the last chapter, you further learn common sense thinking to prevent the occurrence of psychological problems in the future by being your own judge of your beliefs. This is important because as your environment expands more and more, your beliefs become less and less useful to you in predicting how to be and behave.

How expansion of your payoff environment can trigger a possible psychological problem

There are many ways your environment can suddenly be expanded, which may or may not cause you to have a psychological problem. One way is to suddenly find out the student you are trying to train is much smarter than you are. Another is to find out that your professional status is a bit shaky because of scientific advances that question your way of conducting your practice. Yet another is our previous example of infidelity; how your nicely comfortable and restricted, sociosexual environment can expand by discovering that your lover/spouse is cheating on you. We can see that gradually restricting the source of most of your positive and negative payoffs to one relationship will turn it into a close, emotionally dependent, love relationship. The various positive and negative payoffs within that relationship are stable and have high probability. The advantage of this type of restricted sociosexual environment is that it is routine, contrary to the advice we hear on making love relationships work; it is very productive and efficient for both partners. It is a very efficient way of getting one's emotional and sexual needs met.

The assumption made by you, of course, is that your partner in a very close relationship also has his (her) sociosexual environment restricted to payoffs common to both of you. He, however, may not have as restricted an environment as you might believe he should. He may also be getting reinforced elsewhere, aside from the reinforcement you provide. Those possible payoffs from outside your mutually restricted sociosexual environment, positive and negative, which you believed to be very low probability have turned out to be high probability, i.e., his environment has expanded. This environmental change for your mate also triggers an environmental expansion of negative reinforcements for you. It may also trigger a psychological problem, depending upon how you cope with it.

If you have a belief about close love relationships being exclusive ones, which automatically tells you what to do in being successful in such a relationship, that belief certainly does not tell you how to behave to be successful in a non-exclusive, love relationship. Your belief does not tell you how to cope now if it also tells you that love relationships are forever and exclusive. Your belief also does not tell you how to cope with all these new environmental negatives of him (her) being a sexual low life, etc., and the jealousy of him (her) carrying on with someone else; not to mention the personal negatives with which you now describe yourself, beginning with naive and ending with foolish dim wit. One other reaction you are very likely to have is anger. This is also very understandable, for when a very restricted environment changes, and in so doing cuts off positive payoffs, anger is the emotion observed across most species studied, from white rats biting the inoperative food pellet bar in a Skinner box, to chimps screaming and pounding the cage when their learning reinforcements of grapes are discontinued, to we humans showing hate and bitterness in a formerly close, restricted relationship.

- A) Infidelity expands your sociosexual environment —**
- B) You restrict it to shut out infidelity's negatives —**
- C) You create your own psychological problem**

With respect to any psychological problem this environmental expansion may have triggered — you now have an environmental change, a malfunctioning belief, and a host of environmental and personal negatives revealed by the expanded environment. All you need do is deny that any of this is happening (Remove The Dragon, which many of us do) or withdraw from the situation, restricting your sociosexual environment to zero (Remove Yourself, as most of us do) without your former lover or any other lover. Either of these two final steps would pour emotional cement over the external problem and convert it into a psychological one.

You have a choice. You can retreat guaranteeing a problem. But, it would be better instead if you stick with the relationship — to stay within the expanded environment; a) long enough to see if things can be worked out between yourself and your partner, or b) even more importantly, just for yourself, i.e., long enough to eliminate the emotional effect of the negatives caused by finding out that your environment has been expanded in a very sleazy way. If you stick with that expanded environment, and this option is critical, you can win through by exposing

yourself to each and every negative until they no longer have any negative potential to you (Defang The Dragon.) The ways you can do this are pointed out in the next chapter. If you do this — for nothing else than your self respect — you will prevent or resolve a psychological problem in this sociosexual area of life where you are the most vulnerable. You can only do this for yourself by remaining within the expanded environment with all its nasty negatives, and not to restrict your environment by withdrawing from any part of it because you get hurt emotionally.

Crisis Intervention —

One of the few psychotherapies which force you to remain in your troubled, expanded, environment.

Crisis Intervention has three important characteristics. First, it is a short term treatment. The average case lasts 4.9 weeks before the problem is reported resolved. Second, the treatment is very simple and direct. The client has to figure out what recently — within two weeks before the problem started — has driven him or her into emotional crisis. Third, the treatment procedure does not talk about anything but the problem, its negatives, and how they were resolved in previous times, and what can be done currently. For example, let's look at what would happen, if the woman at the Thanksgiving weekend meeting who asked me about her husband's "addictive " personality, asked for Crisis Intervention, no matter how much she wanted to deny that her spouse was not responsible for his own behavior, including his drinking.

In a Crisis Intervention setting, the ultimate aim is for the client to re-examine that portion of his or her payoff environment that had expanded. The first step would be to ask her what had changed in her environment, no more than two weeks before her current emotional upheaval or crisis. For this spouse of the alcoholic, she would likely report that he had started drinking again, or had coped badly with his drinking, or acted in some unacceptable manner when he was drinking, like using physical violence, or cruelty, or absolute disregard for his family, or overtly putting the make on a neighbor's wife, etc. The client is told that she and the therapist are going to play detective; to see what has happened, has it happened before, what was done about it in the past, and what could be done, if not the same thing, about it now? In Crisis Intervention, the therapist is basically recreating the negative environment that produced the emotional crisis and literally forces the client to examine it in detail,

over and over, in a thinking, reasoning, intelligent way. In short, the Crisis Intervention therapist is forcing the client to behave as a psychological adult, no matter how appealing it seems to flee or withdraw from the problem situation.

The therapist tries to keep the troubled person in the expanded personal payoff environment that is causing the crisis. If this is done successfully, no chronic psychological problem will develop, or if it has, it will be resolved. On the other hand, these experts also warn their clients that Crisis Intervention is both an opportunity, and a risk. While the emotions are in "flux", they theorize, major changes in coping can be made, either for better, or for worse. In short, if the person does not remain within the changed environment during the average 4.9 weeks it takes the high emotional "flux" to calm down, the problem can become chronic through avoidance of the troubled environment. In the present example, during the 4.9 weeks of emotional crisis, if the spouse of the alcoholic does not stay with the reality of her spousal payoff environment — no matter how painful — until she emotionally and intellectually adapts to it, she is very likely to go back to rationalizing by asking questions like, "What about my husband's addictive personality?", as well as bailing him out of all the trouble he causes when he drinks to excess.

Does fast therapy mean band-aid therapy? Or just efficient, low cost, environmentally oriented therapy?

Crisis Intervention has been criticized by traditional talk therapists as band-aid therapy. They acknowledge it works, but insist it is only a "surface" remedy which does not get at the "real" underlying problem. Unfortunately, my more traditional colleagues simply lack data to justify that critique. Just because their method does not work fast, does not mean that anything that works fast does not work. What they are not saying, but wishfully implying, is that only their method works, which they know would be a very dumb thing to say.

I have run into this type of therapy chauvinism many times. A couple of years ago, Matt Buttiglieri, the former head of the State of California Psychology Licensing Board, and I were taking a continuing education course on Cognitive Behavior Therapy at UCLA to renew our licenses. The instructor lectured to us that it was much better to go through a bunch of cognitive (mental, thinking, reality testing) procedures with clients before using simple behavioral methods to resolve psychological

problems, such as phobias, etc. When he said the total procedure took a couple of months, I asked him what the advantage was of using his total procedure for his clients, since it took so long? Simple behavioral methods, for example, developed at Stanford by Dr. Brunhilda Ritter, and the Center For Behavior Therapy in Beverly Hills with Dr. Zev Wanderer would cure a life long fear of heights in ten minutes, or a fear of flying in twenty minutes? His answer to my, I thought, reasonable question? "Well, if you are trying to set a speed record..." Again, quickness in resolution in psychotherapy means, as Brunhilda and Zev did, you are keeping the person with the psychological problem within the expanded, troubled, payoff environment and forcing him or her to learn how to deal with it. As they say, if you fall off a horse, you get right back in the saddle, not sign up for a class on what it means to fall off a horse.

Environmental restriction — How to train someone to do something precisely — Environmental expansion — How to educate someone to deal with the world as it really is — Unpredictable, confusing, conflicting, and unstable

An important way of making a distinction between restriction and expansion of an environment is what they each signify in terms of how and what you learn from them. As I pointed out before, you restrict an environment severely to train someone or some animal to perform a task in a very specific, "correct" way — or to indoctrinate that person to remain a psychological child. You expand an environment to give a general education, or in other words, to become a psychological adult. Educating someone gives that person the experience and ability to deal with changing, conflicting information, ideas, beliefs, even conflicting payoffs, and to clarify what is going on, if possible; to make the best choice out of conflicting, perhaps even murky sources of information. The meaning of the word education is from the Latin, *educare*, to lead forth, or the development of powers and character, as opposed to imparting mere knowledge or skill. Education teaches us to think in place of just believing.

**What you get as a psychological adult —
The learned ability to live with Dragons**

It may sound strange that expanding your environment can be educational, especially if the expansion of your own sociosexual environment

by a lover's infidelity causes you pain from the outrageous emotional negatives revealed by that change. Education does not imply, nor should you infer, that you may always like what you learn. This book specifically concerns itself with learning, both over the short and long haul, how to deal with the emotional effects of those environmental and personal negatives which environmental expansion reveals to you. Education always deals with expanding the environment — teaching how to observe, analyze and deal with conflicting sources of information, and beliefs.

Before we go any further, let me define or at least describe the educational model of psychotherapy. As you will see in the following "how to do it" chapters, the educational model is a way of teaching you to be a psychological adult in the face of all sorts of serious negatives, how to Learn To Live With Dragons. This includes a) acquiring the ability to rise above any conflict between any two opposing viewpoints, ideas, beliefs, theories, questions, etc., b) while at the same time being able to deal with a host of negatives without being painfully affected or influenced by them, and c) at the same time, being one's own judge of what you do and what reality is. This concept of the educational model of psychotherapy — learning to become a psychological adult — is important to understand since it is used throughout the book as a positive, creative result of learning to live in an expanded environment where not everything is spelled out for you beforehand.

The end result of psychoeducation is learning to be a psychological adult. A psychological adult is mature and sophisticated. What do these two terms mean; psychologically mature and sophisticated? The best way to define and explain them is by example; i.e., what happens in a problem situation with and without them. To make things crystal clear, let's use an example of what happens as a close relationship breaks up.

What you don't have as a psychological adult — Emotional over-investment in anything or anyone

This example is unique. Of all the losses you will endure, it can be of the same order of psychic pain, emotional gut wrenching and depressive debilitation as you will experience with the death of a beloved child or a life long companion. The breakup of a close relationship is worse in some aspects, because we feel — erroneously in the vast majority of cases — we can do something to rectify the situation. However, reality is we are beating a dead horse, but just don't know, or won't accept it yet.

Because of this erroneous feeling we can do something about the breakup when we can't, our behavior often gets crazy and bizarre. For example, after the breakup when we see a yellow Volkswagen like that of our ex's on the freeway or turnpike, we race after it to see if it is him or her, risking life and limb, while thinking nothing of how childish, silly and dangerously we are behaving. Or we make an ass out of ourselves in displaying excessively emotional, dependent behavior like childish jealousy, demands for attention, lack of emotional confidence, pleading for forgiveness, and an impractical willingness to endure the fires of hell to patch up the relationship, etc; especially an irrational refusal to see that we are still beating a dead relationship horse.

This description of our asinine behavior after a breakup is quite accurate, and it is part of the emotional payment we make for how we began the relationship in the first place. Because of our initial dependency upon someone else instead of ourselves, this mind set or belief can psychologically cripple us when the relationship dies, for months, even years afterwards. This unrealistic type of entry into a close relationship and your misperception of what you are doing — what you are letting yourself in for — can cue you into how psychologically immature and unsophisticated you are, and is also the opposite of what we are looking for as a defining example of psychological adulthood.

Although age and wisdom do not automatically go hand in hand, after sufficient experience in dealing with others in all sorts of situations, one learns to never write an emotional blank check. Never to get so personally involved that your welfare is completely dependent upon someone else. Only a child does that, because he or she has no choice. For example, I remember George, a college friend who went into the army with me. I also remember his sister, one of the most beautiful women I have ever met. After the army, I dated his sister because she was all grown up from the teenager we had left behind years before. What happened? Nothing, nada, zilch. George and I were so close, it was like dating your own sister.

By being so close to George's family, I knew they were traditional with respect to male and female roles, but I had to learn of a twist with regard to his mother's indoctrination of his sister. Sister was not allowed to get serious about anyone, or even think of forming a serious relationship until she could comfortably support herself. Momma had been around the block a few times and saw what happened to others who could not maintain their personal, psychological independence; i.e., who were

not psychological adults. She used her influence to keep her daughter from the likely emotional pain, depression and hopelessness inherent in a close relationship where she would be totally dependent upon her partner for her own happiness. She pointed out that was just asking for trouble.

As she explained it, both men and women need financial as well as emotional independence before either can effectively take part in adult relationships. George's mom deplored the then typical case of women being over-dependent. Even worse, that anyone would accept this condition as a cultural norm rather than an aberration spawned in Hollywood as an oversimplification in making movies that appeal to teenagers.

Being a psychological adult means you recognize a belief for what it is — Just a guideline — Not a mandate to over-invest one's self in love, career, causes, etcetera

In short, being a psychological adult means you may become discomforted, annoyed, upset, irritated, and a lot of other negative things when trouble brews in a relationship. But you will not become psychologically threatened or intimidated. This only happens when you have a lack of experience dealing with expanded environments; a prerequisite for totally buying into the mythical beliefs about relationships. Beliefs such as they, "are made in Heaven, describe predestined pairs of people which should last a lifetime, have great meaning, and are the only source of happiness in one's life." This fine sounding rubbish, if accepted without question, will lead you to misery and self-depreciation when it doesn't work anymore. Unquestioned, untestable beliefs such as these can lead you down a garden path with thorny obstacles for which you are unprepared. They can also encourage you to invest your all without any thought on what you may be getting into in many areas. This over-investment of self can be in love relationships, friendships, career, job, possible achievements, making money, politics, patriotism — you name it.

Which works best? Figuring things out? Or experiencing your negatives until they no longer bother you?

The whole basis of educational psychotherapy, whereby you learn to become a psychological adult in Learning To Live With Dragons, is learning to become your own ultimate judge of yourself, what you are, and what you do. There are two methods used in this book to learn to become your own judge; an experiential one, used in the next six chapters,

and an intellectual one, used in the final chapter.

As incredible as this may seem to you, becoming a psychological adult with acquired intellectual maturity and sophistication is quite simple. It has nothing to do with I.Q. You don't have to be a genius to do this. All you need do is to realize that most of the time you do not operate on thought but on untestable beliefs. In the final chapter, you can learn to recognize a belief about yourself as just a belief using some rules of common sense spelled out there. When you recognize a belief for what it is, rather than indoctrinated "fact," you automatically free yourself of its automatic influence over you. Then you are able to make changes in your perception of what is happening to you when your relationship, or job, or schooling, etc., becomes shaky and jeopardized.

You will be amazed at how much we all use beliefs as a substitute for thinking. By learning how to recognize when you are believing instead of thinking — even though you believe you are thinking, you dramatically increase your chances of preventing future psychological problems. But we go into this in the final chapter. Right now, assuming you are over any denial that you may have a chronic difficulty, you need to learn how to desensitize yourself to the possible environmental and personal negatives you discover in a psychological problem.

Better options than Removing The Dragon, Removing Yourself through denial, defensiveness, rationalization, withdrawal — That's where you begin to resolve things

Over the last twenty five years of working with thousands of people in teaching them to cope with personal negatives using verbal skill exercises, I saw they could cope with real personal and environmental negatives. Learning by doing — even in practice* — provided negative relief for these thousands of people. In the next series of chapters let's see if we can give you some of the same glee; even when your own personal negatives are thrown in your face repeatedly by a psychological drill sergeant who will not let up until you get that well earned insight into yourself as a first step in resolving a psychological problem.

* Footnote

The emotional mid-brain, which handles all of our routine behaviors, does not, and cannot distinguish between a real situation and practice. This is why practice works just as well as in vivo experience in eliminating negative emotional reactions to situations and stimuli.

If, like these problem drinkers we started off the chapter with, you have a psychological problem, where do you start to rid yourself of it? A problem develops in the following order: 1) Environmental change, 2) Belief malfunction, 3) Revealed environmental negatives, 4) Unaccepted personal negatives, and 5) Denial/withdrawal (animal flight.) It makes sense to work on the resolution of the problem in the opposite order, starting with denial and withdrawal. After that, next on the list would be desensitizing yourself to unaccepted personal negatives, a process very similar and related to eliminating withdrawal and/or defensiveness. Then, when you desensitize yourself to environmental negatives, you also adapt yourself to the environmental change, which caused the problem in the first place. Finally, in this sequence of working our way backwards, we can see how to cope effectively with malfunctioning beliefs by learning how to use critical thinking and reasoning to cope. We will cover that bear of a subject in the last chapter.

Starting with the next chapter, you can begin to learn how to make denial and/or withdrawal voluntary, under your control as a psychological adult, rather than be ruled by an automatic mid-brain habit — defensiveness — of which most of us are unaware.

Chapter Four

Defanging The Dragon By Verbally Simulating Going Back Into The Negative Environment That Caused The Problem In The First Place

When You Fall Off A Horse, Get Right Back Up In The Saddle

Ancient folklore

When I was a student working at the Navy Electronic Laboratories (NEL) at Point Loma in San Diego, scuba diving was just coming to public attention. There weren't very many of us divers then because there was little commercial scuba activity. There were no organized dive boats. There were no classes you could take to learn how to dive. "Sea Hunt" with Lloyd Bridges diving off Palos Verdes was in the future. I was taught by friends at the Navy labs who were trained by the members of the Navy UDT (underwater demolition teams, as the U.S. Navy SEALs were then called), assigned to the labs to do all sorts of things underwater. This was early enough in the development of diving equipment that we made our own scuba tanks, as these early SEALs did themselves, out of old, high altitude, oxygen tanks taken out of scrapped WWII Army and Navy bombers.

When I left NEL and went to UCLA, a bunch of the other graduate students, and one of the faculty, decided they wanted to learn how to scuba dive. There were only two qualified divers in the department then, myself and Barry, who later went on to chair the department at Fresno State — one of the Fighting Raisins, as we later called him and his Fresno football teams. Barry and I trained the other graduate students in all the procedures and safety measures, first in a pool, and then in the Pacific Ocean at Malibu. The faculty member who went with us to learn how to dive was, a then young Dick Atkinson, now President of The University of California.

When we took them on their first Pacific dive at Malibu, everything went well until an old friend and fellow clinical psychologist, Bill, let me know by hand signals he was in trouble. In the same way, I told Barry, Dick and the others I was taking Bill back to the beach. When we got

there, Bill flopped down on the first dune above the water line and lay there breathing heavily. Nothing was wrong. He was just exhausted and scared by his underwater reaction to his exhaustion. He told me he was never going back in there again. Bill hadn't believed what we told him about needing to be in good physical shape to scuba dive.

Jennie, my wife and a former Brit, seeing the both of us back on the beach without the others, Bill on his back with his tongue hanging out and the look on his face, proceeded, in her best, British Army, Sergeant Major manner, to keep Bill from acquiring a fear of diving. She was following the ancient wisdom cited above, that if you fall off a horse, get right back up on it. Since Bill was slightly chubby then, and fitted out in a black wetsuit, she started with, "You look like a beached whale. What are you breathing hard for? That was just a playful little swim. The rest of them are not having any difficulty. Dick's an old man (of 32) and he's swimming like a fish. Get back in there." She kept up her encouragements until Bill realized that it would be more pleasant drowning at five fathoms than staying on the beach with Jennie's assessments of his personal character. He and I got up and silently walked into the sea again, while Jennie winked at me and smilingly gave us thumbs up. In going back in to the sea, Bill re-expanded his environment by defanging the dragon before it got a chance to threaten him.

I don't know that Bill took scuba diving seriously again, but he wasn't afraid to, nor embarrassed by his performance that day. Jennie had set it up such that he could neither restrict his undersea environment, nor retreat from it, but keep it expanded, and therefore, not a problem. Doing this for yourself without having Jennie to encourage you on while learning how to become a psychological adult is what this chapter is all about.

The psychological problem caused by POW brainwashing

A few years ago, I was asked to give a talk on brainwashing and its effects at a Veterans Administration Hospital as part of its program on POW-MIA Day. The audience was mainly ex-POWs and professional staff. I talked about what happened in the Korean War POW camps and then pointed out how brainwashing can be seen as very severe restriction of psychological payoffs to effect control over behavior and beliefs. I pointed out that brainwashing operates in the same way as indoctrination, the preferred teaching method in most of Western civilization, which effects the same control over behavior and beliefs, but through less severe environmental restriction. My POW talk was very well received, except

for one ex-Korean POW who became very agitated. He insisted that the data reported by the U.S. military medical and psychological specialists, who interviewed the repatriated POWs, was not accurate. Specifically, he denied that any of the Korean War POWs had trouble with each other, and could communicate at all times. He demanded that I go back to the podium and tell the audience that I had misled them. This was all communicated with a strong overtone of emotional urgency. He also kept repeating over and over again, "There was nothing we could do," with reference to the incredibly high probability of dying in those camps if a Korean War POW didn't have a buddy who would nurse him through any sickness.

You can interpret what that ex-POW told me in several ways. Based upon the published information about Korean POWs which I enlarge upon herein, I see it as an indication that he had, and still does have — even after 40 years — a psychological problem connected with his experience in the Korean POW camps; something he has never successfully dealt with and resolved. As you will see yourself, experiences of these Korean War vets in the POW camps easily fit the first four parts of the etiology of a psychological problem:

1. **Environmental change:** What occurred in the POW camps certainly was a major, significant change in the POW environment. The social payoff environment changed radically. The social values set up and socially reinforced in the U. S. Army and back in civilian life were radically changed. The prison camp payoff environment became unpredictable using normal social beliefs.

2. **Malfunctioning Beliefs:** In that prison camp environment, their beliefs about other GIs, and how one should behave as a member of the U. S. Army, became invalid and no longer predicted what should happen there.

3. **Environmental Negatives Revealed:** The change that happened in these prison camps exposed the POWs to horrible, day by day environmental negatives such as GIs unnecessarily dying around them, the loss of trust in any other POW, and the lack of feedback and guidance from any other POW. Very likely, for the first and only time in their lives, the POWs were truly socially isolated and on their own.

4. **Personal Negatives Revealed:** The change also revealed their own

personal negatives and poor coping within that environment. Their callousness and lack of concern for fellow GIs — whom one could no longer trust — was caused by the passivity of 95% of the POWs to this breakdown in beliefs and social structure. They made no protest and went along with what the Chinese Communist instructors wanted. As for the POWs who had resisted the Chinese instructor's wishes, follow up research found a consistent pattern of objection to authority. These GIs, unfortunately, had done the same thing to the U.S. Army, spending most of their time in army penal stockades.

5. Denial and/or Withdrawal: There were two very likely coping devices the POWs could use. They could deny the environmental negatives and personal negatives which the brainwashing procedures revealed to them, and they could rationalize that denial, thereby effecting a withdrawal by psychologically restricting themselves from their fellow POWs. Such a psychological withdrawal through rationalization would further separate them emotionally and mentally from their daily POW camp environment negatives. This rationalization would be the typically observed human coping method of minimizing or denying the importance of negatives. The environmental negatives minimized would be other GIs sick and dying around them and their own personal negatives of callousness to other GI's plight. This could be done by simply telling themselves, for example; "The other (sick) guy probably is an informer or collaborator, and deserves everything he gets."

The occurrence of the first four steps of a psychological problem does not mean a psychological problem will absolutely occur and become chronic. The all-important fifth step of denial or withdrawal is necessary. It is the emotionally prompted, psychological muck poured over the problem which prevents the person who denies there is anything wrong, and/or withdraws from the troubled environment, from working to resolve it, either immediately, or later if it becomes chronic. That unhappy Korean War vet who denied the unpleasant, negative reality of forty years ago, brought back by my lecture on POW-MIA day, apparently was still troubled by that reality and had an emotional problem with it. I would have liked to help him, but as you can see from his responses, unless he asked for help, what could I do? But I can show you what would have helped him, if he had asked, which can serve as a model for you to help yourself resolve your own problems.

The basic psychological problem — an abstract anxiety (phobic) reaction in disguise

Once the person with the psychological problem agrees to fully participate in resolving his or her problem, then denial, rationalization and withdrawal are more easily seen as that which perpetuates the problem and blocks one from dealing with it. The key action to be taken therefore, is to get the negatives associated with the problem under control, and consequently, the unpleasant emotions they generate. Once you've done that, you've expanded the person's environment again and there is no longer a psychological problem pressing.

If you haven't made this observation for yourself already, let me make it now, emphatically. Basically, the treatment for all psychological problems is the resolution of the negatives. That's it. That is the necessary and sufficient condition to treat and resolve the psychological problem. A rule of thumb is that all psychological problems are no more than an abstract phobic reaction in disguise. The difference between this methodology and that (or the lack of) of the more traditional psychotherapy modes is that those more traditional modes of talk therapy made the basic assumption that one could do little or nothing about personal and environmental negatives associated with psychological problems besides recognizing them and somehow putting up with them by understanding their emotional consequences. They made the same mistake in assuming that phobic reactions to concrete things like aeroplanes and elevators could not be directly resolved, but only by finding out their "underlying psychic causes."

Behavior therapy and modification over the past 75 years, and in the past 25 years, Orienting Reflex therapy, have shown us that learned personal and environmental negatives and their emotional consequences can be dealt with effectively, and in short order. So, to resolve a psychological problem, you treat it the same as you would an anxiety or phobic reaction. In short, you defang the Dragon that poses the threat to one's emotional stability. Given this basic rule of thumb of treatment of the psychological problem, just how does one defang the psychological beast which produces such maladaptive coping in us?

Phobic reactions center on concrete things like snakes, heights, aeroplanes, and insects, etc. Psychological problems have abstract concerns, such as feelings of inferiority, jealousy, inadequacy, personal lack, deficits and guilt. To generate effective treatment protocols for the concrete

or abstract negatives it only is necessary to look at the theoretical basis for treatment of anxiety. Within that framework, both types, the concrete and abstract cases fall out of the general treatment schemes. To understand this theoretical framework we can briefly look at the operation of the **Orienting and Defensive Reflexes** within our nervous system.

Instead of restricting the environmental-personal negatives in your environment extinguish the emotions they trigger using Orienting and Defensive Reflex methodology

Our Autonomic (automatic, involuntary) nervous system has two equal parts; the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems. The sympathetic half was observed by early researchers to be in sympathy (activated) with feelings of anxiety, upset, anger, nervousness, irritability, etc. Hence they simply called it the sympathetic nervous system. On the other hand, the other half was not noted for much of anything (normalcy) that they could put their finger on, so they called it the para(around)-sympathetic system simply because it extended around the sympathetic half (above and below along the spine.)

The physiological basis of anxiety and its resolution

The Defensive Reflex (DR) is a general physiological response associated with activation of a number of sympathetic system measures, like increased heart rate, blood pressure, vasoconstriction of blood vessels to the brain, etc. It is also correlated with specific and general anxiety through subjective reports. The Orienting Reflex (OR) is another general physiological response, but associated with activation of a number of parasympathetic system measures. It is correlated with things like attention, information processing, thought, problem solving, etc. The Orienting Reflex, oddly enough, is not a measure of relaxation or passivity and inaction, but of activation, and not of a negative character, like anxiety. The OR and the DR are mutually antagonistic and competitive. In short, if you are anxious or nervous and you suddenly begin to orient to things around you — pay attention, process information — you will drastically reduce the amount of anxiety you feel. Given that then as the basic treatment strategy — elicit an OR to eliminate the DR — let's look at the five stimuli classes which will evoke an Orienting Reflex.

The five triggers of the involuntary Orienting Reflex

Research on orienting and defensive reflexes began in the laboratory of Ivan Pavlov, the great Russian psychologist and psychophysicologist. It has been continued by his colleagues and students over the past eighty years. In the United States, most of the significant work has been concentrated at UCLA by Don Lindsley, Irv Maltzman and their students. We have known for the past forty years, both specifically and in broad terms, what categories of stimuli will make us involuntarily orient at the fundamental level of our primitive nervous system and thereby inhibit, countercondition or extinguish a learned DR to a trauma/anxiety situation. There are five classes of stimuli which will reliably evoke the OR, all of which involve cortical activation/information processing.

1. Stimuli with *novelty*. - Anything that is unexpected or new which does not match the memory encoded algorithm, engram, or neuronal model for the situational stimulus set. The stimulus class that has novelty is the simplest to use in invoking an observable OR. Unexpectedly snapping of the fingers in the presence of a dog, for example, will cause the head, ears and eyes of the animal to "orient" to the source of the novel sound. Novelty is short lived and will habituate within two to four trials for most animals.
2. Stimuli with *biological significance*. - Anything that satisfies our biological hungers. Examples of OR triggers are food and sexual stimuli. When hunger or sex drive are active, food and sexual stimuli will reliably evoke an OR. Case studies demonstrate either works well in reducing anxiety (DR) linked to a conditioned phobic stimulus. Both, however, habituate at the same rate as drive reduction occurs
3. Stimuli with *innate signal value*. - Anything that we instinctually orient to such as bodily sensations. The most widely used stimulus in the class having innate signal value is touch. Brunhilda Ritter used it successfully in treating childhood snake phobia and in vivo, adult acrophobia from the Hoover Tower on the Stanford campus. The latter was accomplished in ten to thirty minutes of continuous touch as the trigger of the OR. In clinical situations, touch does not seem to habituate as rapidly as other stimuli that can be used. Pain is also closely related to the OR. Clinicians specializing in anxiety treatment often see clients referred by general physicians because of physical damage done to themselves trying

to alleviate anxiety with painful stimulation, including self-mutilators without a psychotic diagnosis. Other innately significant bodily stimuli are sensations associated with deep breathing. Deep breathing causes an alkalosis recovery reaction to an acidosis blood state (excess carbon dioxide [CO₂].) It is known to evoke an OR each time it occurs. It is seen as a) a common experimental artifact in psychophysiological studies, b) as a procedure competitive with anxiety (DR) in clinical work, or c) as the physiological basis of carbon dioxide/anxiety therapy — deep breathing reliably evokes an OR. Its use, however, is limited to the number of times the clinician can prompt it without causing excessive CO₂ to be thrown off resulting in tonic blood alkalosis and cortical disorientation.

4. Stimuli with *learned or acquired signal value*.- Anything that we have learned to pay attention to by any means. The last two classes (4 and 5) are the most useful set of stimuli in creatively evoking an OR to compete with a DR without significant habituation. Learned or acquired signal value depends upon the history of the individual client. For some, it is cooking and recipes. For others with a different educational background, it is a summary of the works of Jackson Pollock. The latter, for example, was successfully used with a Fine Arts student client lecturing to the clinician as a continuous OR trigger for treating aerophobia, in vivo, during a 20 minute flight from LAX to San Diego. In case the Pollock generated set of stimuli had habituated, a lecture on Frederick Remington, John Singer Sergeant or Michelangelo Buonarroti, etc., could have been substituted to maintain the OR.

5. Stimuli with *instructed signal value*.- Anything that we have been told or instructed to pay attention to, either by others or ourselves. In a general sense, this class of stimuli require that information processing be activated; usually by an instructed task that involves information processing. This process can be as simple as counting backwards by three from 100, classifying SUDs levels from low to high, or making judgments (evaluations) of negative statements about oneself. Any hand-eye coordination task involves information processing. These tasks will reliably trigger the OR and have been used to eliminate aerophobia by teaching phobics to fly an airplane or used to eliminate fear of heights by tossing sunflower seeds into a trashcan several stories below. 37

My friend and colleague, master clinician Zev Wanderer often used information processing as a continuous OR trigger when happenstance

seated him next to an aerophobic fellow traveler in the air. Zev's therapeutic OR instructions gave the aerophobe a task, such as finding a cloud with a specific shape or a distinctive feature on the ground that could be recognized. The amount of time spent in such short term, informal, in vivo therapy to eliminate aerophobia was comparable to that spent in actual OR counterconditioning in more formal therapy settings; on the order of twenty minutes. An instructed, information processing task in conjunction with flooding (overloading the client with negatives.) appears to be the most efficient, productive and quickest method one can use to reduce anxiety. Case studies having a snake phobic sketch snakes in the reptile house at the zoo, or trace their outlines from a book in the library show that this last trigger of the OR is a fast, reliable clinical method for eliminating anxiety, typically within one session of flooding.

Clinical use of the Orienting Reflex by the Alphabet Soup Therapies in eliminating trauma anxiety

The use of these five stimulus class triggers for the Orienting Reflex in clinically reducing anxiety and phobic states was spelled out in detail twenty-five years ago in my book, *Kicking The Fear Habit*. This was the first clinical exposition on the use of the OR to eliminate anxieties. About fifteen years ago, however, a set of so called "Alphabet Soup" therapies appeared on the scene, beginning with EMDR or Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing, and was soon followed by a number of others; TFT (Thought Field Therapy), TAB (Touch And Breathe), TIR (Traumatic Incident Reduction, CISD (Critical Incident Stress Debriefing), etc. These Alphabet Soup therapies were in response to the presumed need for simple treatment modalities for post traumatic stress disorder problems caused by combat stress, muggings, accidents, rape, physical spouse abuse, and the like. Eye Movement Desensitization, for example, instructed the anxious client to follow with the eyes a wand or pencil waved back and forth in front of the clients face. At the same time the client was instructed to keep the anxiety producing situation in mind. With this procedure the anxiety was eliminated within ninety minutes for most clients. For clients who had poor vision, they were told to track the position of audible finger snaps going from one side of the head to the other and back. This variation of procedure produced similar results to eye tracking of the pencil. In Thought Field Therapy, the client was told to keep the anxious situation in mind while the therapist tapped various

parts of the clients body. This procedure produced similar results to EMDR. TAB is similar to TFT with the client touching different areas of the body while taking a deliberate breath at the same time. TIR and CISD simply flooded the client with an accounting of the details of the traumatic situation and basically required the client to go over the details and the emotions generated with the therapist, or with a therapy group. These other Alphabet Soup therapies give similar results to EMDR.

A few years ago, two of my colleagues, both brilliant theoreticians, Nat Denny at Texas A & M, and Michael Armstrong of Sydney, Australia, published some superb reports, demonstrating that EMDR, TFT as well as the other Alphabet Soup therapies were all examples of using the Orienting Reflex to eliminate conditioned Defensive Reflex traumas. As Nat and Michael pointed out, Eye Movement Desensitization is an instructed (hand) eye coordination task that will evoke and sustain an orienting reflex for as long as would be necessary to extinguish a conditioned defensive reflex (anxiety response) to stimuli in a traumatic situation such as combat, rape, mugging or physical abuse of a spouse or child. Also investigated was Thought Field Therapy and found similar to EMDR in that the client was paying attention to finger taps on various parts of the body, supposedly representing Chinese folk medicine pressure points. TAB or Touch And Breathe specifically uses two recognized OR trigger stimuli, as well as an instructed response trigger. TIR and CISD, the other alphabet soup therapies looked at, also evoked continuous orienting reflex responses with their instructed procedures. These last two modalities had their clients pay attention to, as well as quantify and categorize, then discuss and analyze, the details and their emotive responses in the traumatic anxiety producing situations. They essentially give the same results as crisis intervention, in about the same time using much the same procedures.

Unfortunately, the typical clinician knows little more about the Orienting Reflex than the novel stimuli class. Therefore, usual attempts by practitioners of the Alphabet Soup therapies (including their critics) to theoretically justify and explain (or carp about) the effectiveness of these procedures at professional meetings border on loose, schizoid type associations that do not stand the least objective scrutiny. The important facts are that over twenty-two thousand clinicians have been trained in the Alphabet Soup therapies over the past decade, helping clients with trauma negatives everyday using Orienting Reflex theory principles.

Given that we now have a general understanding on how to reduce

anxiety using the basic physiological makeup of our nervous system, and the use of Orienting Reflex therapy is widespread and very successful since I first proposed it over twenty-five years ago, let's now apply that knowledge to the reduction of abstract, personal worth anxieties as we go back to looking at methods we can use in the resolution of the crux of the psychological problem using verbal methods, i.e., talk psychotherapy.

Do we have to be defensive automatically — Using denial without thought?

With the primitive *Here Be Dragons* coping, the afflicted person has two options, Remove The Dragon, or Remove Yourself from the Dragon. This can be done physically or psychologically. If physical means cannot be used, then the psychological will be. The first option is typically the first used, therefore denial is always the likely starting point when resolving a psychological problem. If I were to try to help that unfortunate ex-Korean POW, I would first teach him how to make his denial of what happened to him in Korea voluntary. By voluntary, I mean that he could have the option to make a very deliberate, conscious choice to deny something or to admit it. Denial is always linked to being emotionally defensive. To make his choices voluntary, I would first have to teach him how to cope in general with negatives without getting defensive. Then, when he learns to be sophisticated about denial of anything through psychological education and its psychological penicillin, I could teach him how to not be defensive about his experiences in Korea. If I could do this for him, he would then have nothing emotionally negative to retreat from and could resolve his psychological problem about what happened in Korea. He would be comfortable about not being defensive about his imperfect self and his experiences and no longer feel a need to automatically deny — without thought — things which made him feel less than perfect. He could then use his thinking cortex to integrate his experiences in Korea as a particularly rough and nasty part of his life, but not something for which he deserves ongoing psychological purgatory. In doing this we follow the three rules of using psychological penicillin; 1) it must work fast so we can see its positive results, 2) its results must be measurable, and 3) if the first use of it doesn't work in a reasonably short time — even though we expect it to — we must be able to change what we do, or how we do it, finding some other method from the five classes of Orienting Reflex stimuli that does the job.

In attacking the problem, we don't start out with an emotionally drenched problem situation. We don't start with learning how to cease denying things that happened in Korean POW camps. Instead, we start out simple. We get him to drop a bad habit that is not saturated with emotion. The goal is to teach him how not to be defensive in general. It is easier to start with a relatively safe area, such as to stop automatically denying that he is scratching his ear or ankle or elbow, for example, when criticized for doing such innocuous things. Although it may surprise you, as far as our emotional mid-brain complex is concerned there is really little difference in being told it is morally, socially, or practically wrong to scratch your ear as blamed for another GI dying because of your social indifference and isolation. The reason for this similar reaction is that our response to any criticism — even our own towards ourselves — is a result of having a belief that we need to be perfect in everything we do. If someone points out that scratching our nose is wrong, we give almost the same emotionally prompted response to that critique as if someone had accused us of being a scoundrel. Cognitively, however, it is much easier to recognize that the guilt we feel when criticized for scratching one's nose is arbitrary, even silly.

A direct analogy to the situation of teaching our ex-POW to not be defensive starting with a less emotionally tinged problem, is teaching someone to swim in the less threatening shallow end of the pool rather than the deep end. All the swimmer need do is stand up, with the realization of; "What in hell am I getting panicky about. This water is only up to my waist!" This analogy is so direct that it matches the learner being told that meaningless, innocuous things like nose scratching are negative, and then suddenly realizing; "What am I getting defensive about? Do I really have to deny that I scratch my nose if someone else says they don't like it?" Because of the large number of people I have observed who have this belief that says we must be perfect, prompting them into this automatic and psychologically asinine defensive pattern, I assume it is due to poor parenting practice. In childhood, our parents overreacted and scared the hell out of us for misbehaving, demanding we be little angels or else. Yet that early emotional, trauma conditioning does not require we turn belly up on a couch in Manhattan or Beverly Hills for months or years waiting for that insight to develop. It is much more practical to prompt this insight by teaching the learner how to place the controversy over scratching his or her nose in perspective. Let me describe how I and my colleagues dispense psychological penicillin in teaching people to

achieve that happy state of affairs wherein they ask the very important question, "What in hell am I getting defensive (panicky) about?"

Using Fogging — developed to teach assertiveness — to resolve psychological problems — is analogous to finding out that Aspirin — developed to ease toothaches — can prevent and treat coronary disease

There are a number of ways we can desensitize you to your personal negatives as well as the environmental negatives revealed by a psychological problem. One, as in traditional talk therapy is slow and rambling, while others are much faster and systematic. There is no doubt that just talking to someone about your negatives will work, assuming that you can maintain a thinking orientation and adequately suppress the emotional, mid-brain belief mode of operation. The difficulty is in continually maintaining a thinking mode. When talking about personal negatives, the problem is they will automatically switch you into midbrain operation and out of thinking cortex. So, it will be difficult to talk about your negatives if you automatically get defensive when anyone, including yourself, brings up negatives, which you have not yet been able to accept. I am of a very practical mind. Anything that works is good. If you can get yourself to respond in a non-defensive manner to your own personal negatives, then just talk about them to someone you trust and their negative impact upon you will diminish. But if you find you get too defensive, then another option besides just talking is necessary.

As pointed out previously, the ways to eliminate personal negatives based upon evoking an Orienting Reflex to eliminate anxiety depends upon your own creativity and ingenuity. You have five different OR stimuli classes to work from in generating treatment methods. What ever works is the rule of thumb. However, since we already have a set of tried and tested methods for eliminating abstract anxiety associated with psychological problems used with thousands of learners and therapy clients, I will use those to demonstrate how this can be done quickly and simply.

The implications of Orienting Reflex therapy for merging talk psychotherapy with behaviorism to improve it

This last class of instructed signal value stimuli (5) is the most useful and interesting from the point of view of the talk psychotherapist because it has implications for general talk psychotherapy in reducing anxiety

about therapy issues that block progress. I developed a specific, trainable verbal skill that allows a client to eliminate personal and environmental anxiety that was abstract in kind related to self-worth, personal negatives, etc., as opposed to fears of concrete subways, airplanes, autos, elevators, etc. This skill, called Fogging, teaches the client to process the information available in a critique rather than passively react to it, deny it, or become defensive and withdraw psychologically from the negatives therapy uncovers, instead of dealing with them. This learnable skill is taught using verbal flooding to overwhelm the learner with personal negatives. Criticism, real or imagined, self or other generated, is directed at the client in a role playing situation until desensitization or "insight into self" occurs. The effectiveness of the Fogging procedure, is based upon a) the efficiency of flooding, b) the information processing communality of all OR evoking triggers, and c) the very quick acting, instructed task/signal value class of OR triggers. Fogging used with flooding very rapidly desensitizes clients to criticism of self and personal negatives, typically in less than 20 minutes, allowing them to deal constructively with previously avoided material in resolving a problem. This is a revolutionary process when linked with traditional talk psychotherapy, or with the self-help mode, allowing the client to do more than only become aware of emotional motives and psychological blocks, i.e., to eliminate them instead of just understand them. Fogging, as well as the Negative Assertion technique detailed later, can literally reshape the personal Superego or social conscience into a practical behavioral guideline from a harsh, supervisory imperative that must be obeyed without question.

Hopefully, the ex-Korean POW might pick up this book and read it. He might even get something out of it that would enable him to resolve his old psychological problem about what happened in the Korean POW camps. Our ex-POW could resolve his psychological problem developed forty years ago in a Korean Prisoner of war camp by using these same skills, first set out in *When I Say No, I Feel Guilty*. They were developed to teach people how to successfully overcome the psychological problem caused by a lack of assertiveness.

Using Fogging and Negative Assertion as extinguishers for abstract anxieties associated with psychological problems

We start with two of the verbal coping skills given in "Guilty", i.e., Fogging and Negative Self Assertion. The object here is to teach you

methods by which you can minimize or eliminate your own negative emotional reactions to personal and or environmental negatives. Practice of these skills from "Guilty" greatly reduces your anxiety reaction to criticism or public self-examination of your personal negatives. While the principle used in all successful methods of desensitizing you to your personal negatives is the same, it is easier and quicker to use Fogging and Negative Self Assertion to desensitize ourselves to abstract personal negatives than other methods. While anything that works is good, the easiest and fastest should be tried first (i.e., the first requirement for a psychological penicillin.) Hence, we will start out with Fogging and Negative Self Assertion. If the use of these two verbal skills desensitize the negatives in question, we will not have to use any other treatment method to resolve the problem. The probability of success, from past teaching and clinical experience, is that they will do the trick quite well.

The how-to-do-it, self-help model of the five etiological steps that can be used to describe your own psychological problem can be found in the Appendices at the end of the book (see Appendix A.) In filling out the description of your psychological problem, you may want to use the self-help skill, Negative Inquiry (see later in this chapter) in specifying and detailing the environmental and personal negatives with which you need to deal. After doing that, this information can be used to organize the practice list of environmental and personal negatives you can use to resolve your problem (see Appendix B.)

Isn't this method just teaching people how to be assertive And then calling it something else?

Before I show you how to use Fogging and or Negative Self Assertion in resolving a psychological problem, I want to answer the following question asked by learner/clients; "If you are using verbal skills used to teach people how to be assertive, aren't you doing the same thing here? Just teaching me to be assertive?" The answer to that important question is found in looking at what learning to be assertive involves.

Learning assertiveness has two parts. The first part is desensitizing yourself to all the environment negatives and personal negatives to which becoming assertive exposes you; what the manipulator uses to make you give up. In short, without some practice in first dealing with the negatives involved in the psychological problem which causes you to be non-assertive, you will not be successful in the second part; going out into

the social environment filled with manipulative people and trying to be assertive. The typical learner would likely give up trying because of not being able to cope effectively with all the negatives involved in becoming assertive; why he withdrew from this area of life in the past. That is why the practice with Fogging and Negative Self Assertion is so valuable to a client learning to be assertive; *by first successfully learning to deal with all the negatives a manipulator throws at him or her and not having to Remove Yourself from the Dragon.*

Here, in this chapter, you and I will do the same thing, but for other psychological problems besides being non-assertive. This use of Fogging and/or Negative Self Assertion "teaches" learners to judge and eliminate the negatives which block them from going back into the troubled environment, the place where the dreaded dragon is. Once back in the expanded environment, these learners can deal with whatever negatives/problems which need to be taken care of. For some, they will have to deal with spouses or mother in laws. For others, they will have to rejoin the sociosexual milieu to resolve the problems inherent in dating and courting, or going to college and successfully handling the myriad of conflicting negatives in becoming educated, perhaps being a boss and not retreating from the negatives of that job, etc. So the answer to that important question is "No. This is not just assertiveness training with a different name. It is the part of learning to be assertive that resolved the psychological problem of being emotionally manipulable" It is using the same methods to reach a distinctively different goal; being able to say to any thing, person or situation, the wisdom inherent in coping notion given in Chapter One; "There are good things out there and there are bad things out there. And I can deal with the bad things, no matter what they are or how bad they are." In summary, once you learn how to resolve one psychological problem, you learn how to resolve them all.

The most important part of this therapy method — Learning to judge yourself and your own negatives

Fogging and Negative Self Assertion were designed for responding to critique and defuse any negatives by experientially learning to judge your own superego when dealing with negatives. Learn first how to be your own judge with Fogging and then after practice, move on to do it with Negative Self Assertion. Learning to judge your own superego is just another way of saying that you have the ability to extinguish emotional

negatives, either ones about yourself, or your environment. That concept of being your own judge is most important in the present context because it is also a part of traditional talk psychotherapy, though it is not talked about in this way. The prime purpose of talk psychotherapy is to get you to enhance your ability to think and analyze your behavior, motives and negative emotions rather than just react to them. The aim of traditional talk psychotherapy, of course, is to understand why we do the things we do, and feel the negative things we feel, but not necessarily with the aim of doing something about them. That is considered beyond the scope of traditional talk psychotherapy since the controlling agent, the civilizing Superego is seen as beyond the reach of traditional psychotherapy.

Retraining and reshaping your own Superego — Your indoctrinated social conscience

This Orienting Reflex methodology, to the contrary, gives us the ability to retrain and reshape the Superego; the major cause of the traditional problem conflict between the civilized and animal in our psyche. Learning to become your own judge through psychophysiological retraining goes beyond what is hoped for in traditional therapy; it gives one control over one's Superego; the so called civilizing influence. Therefore, to put this concept of being your own judge into action, I will first give you a definition of Fogging and then place this skill in context of other people criticizing you. How you deal with these verbal negatives — critique — by being your own judge — is an ideal model for dealing with your own personal negatives, particularly newly revealed ones which block you from resolving a psychological problem.

Separating the two parts of a criticism or critique — The objective part, which is usually factual — The subjective overlay, which is someone else's opinion!

Fogging is a verbal coping skill developed to teach people how to respond productively to negatives or criticism given by other people. To understand how to Fog a critique, you have to understand that critiques are always of two parts. The first part is the objective statement of behavior, belief, thought, etc. that is the object of the critique. The second part is the subjective judgment of the other person by which you are informed that the objective behavior — what ever you are doing — is

negative. For example, I demonstrate this distinction between objective statements and the subjective judgments critics add on to them when teaching classes by catching one of the students busily writing notes as I lecture on Fogging. For example; to one whom I know has a job at Universal Studios, I say; "You're writing again aren't you?" in a voice no one would interpret as positive. Having no previous experience in dealing with this type of negative situation, the student usually just stares at me with a disbelieving face and a gaping mouth. A stomach clenching reaction is typically reported as a response to my critique. Then the student would be instructed to respond in a non-defensive way that separates the two parts of the critique — the objective statement of behavior versus the negative judgment of that behavior by a critic. Therefore, the student is taught, in this case, to respond using the first part of Fogging, **Agreeing With Truth**; "You're right. I am taking notes again." - then going back to record on her note pad what I had just said to her.

Here the student is also taught the basic assumption of a manipulator; that three key words are linked, understand, agree, and behave. The manipulative logic is that "If you understand what I point out, you must agree with it, and if you agree, you must behave according to it." If you use your own critical judgment, you can see there is no objective linkage between understanding, agreeing and behavior, other than the artificial one imposed by the manipulator. The student, therefore, is quite free to agree on the objective report given by her critic, yet be her own judge of its negative assessment.

The student is then given a chance to use the second part of Fogging, **Agreeing With Logic or In General Principle**; "If you keep taking useless notes about things already written down in your training manual, you will surely turn this seminar into a big waste of time. You won't have an adequate picture of what I do, only your notes. When you get back to the studio — which generously paid for your tuition through creative accounting — and they ask you to give them a review of it at the next staff meeting, what are you going to do? Xerox your notes and pass them out? After that mess it will be all down hill with you in charge of the studio Mailroom. Forget having your chance to direct or produce. A Lena Fassbinder Wortmuller you won't be." The student's Fogging response to that is just as simple as the first one; "That makes a lot of sense" — once again going back to write down what I had just said.

Then I give the student the opportunity to hear the third way people will criticize, and she can respond by Fogging, by **Agreeing With The**

Odds; "Because you are so headstrong, thinking you know it all and taking no advice on what is best for you, it's almost a certainty you will screw up again, even in the Mailroom, giving your boss no choice but to boot you out onto the street, where, eventually, you will end up as the most stubborn, most self-directed, homeless person in the whole Malibu Colony." Again, the student's response separates the objective part of the criticism from the negative judgment of it, with; "You may be right. That could happen." — then again going back to writing notes on what I had just said about agreeing with the odds.

The concept of being your own judge is related to Fogging, the most popular of all the verbal coping skills given in "Guilty." In being your own judge, you have to use common sense observations to assess the rough probability of what someone tells you being fact or belief. In Fogging, you are called upon to do the same thing; make a judgment of the probability that what a critic is telling you is correct. When that young female student agreed with my statement she might wind up homeless in Malibu, the only thing we did not agree upon was the specific probability that it would happen. I was arguing that it was very high. By her lack of concern for my critique once she learned to use Fogging as an anxiety reduction device, she judged that probability to be near zero. In short, I had just desensitized her to some possible, environmental and personal negatives she might run into in her future career.

Learning how to cope with lots of negative verbal stimuli

Fogging has two very reliable effects in practice. The first effect is to not reward anyone who tries to emotionally manipulate you. This manipulation is done by suggesting to you that there are environmental and personal negatives inherent in what you want to do as opposed to no negatives in what the manipulator wants you to do. The manipulator gets no reward when you agree that, indeed, there may be many negatives in the way you want things done — but you are going to do them that way never the less. The second very reliable effect is the desensitization of any anxiety or bad feelings connected to any environmental and personal negatives pointed out to you by a critic, as well as the prompting of the insight question of "Why am I being defensive." These two major effects are why Fogging was and still is received so well by learners.

I am going to present a series of dialogs to you detailing the sequence by which we are going to teach the ex-POW how to achieve these two reliable results of Fogging, from which he can deal with his personal

negatives, and teach you how to do the same thing. We can do this with:

- A. A demonstration for our Korean War ex-POW (and yourself) what Fogging is.
- B. Have the ex-POW (hypothetically, of course) practice Fogging in response to general criticism.
- C. Again hypothetically, have the ex-POW respond non-defensively with Fogging and Negative Self Assertion when I discuss with him the negatives, environmental and personal that happened in the Korean POW camps forty years ago.
- D. Have you go through a series of training dialogs with a friend critiquing you according to these dialogs. The dialogs are appropriate for all sorts of psychological problems and the negatives associated with them.

Remember that the practice of Fogging is also the practice of being your own judge. This first demonstration dialog is somewhat long to show you the many types of criticism or personal negatives that can be handled with Fogging, and later, with a combination of Fogging and Negative Self Assertion. It is a demonstration which I use in all my classes on assertiveness. It works so well I use it whenever I have to demonstrate Fogging to a new audience. It is usually done in front of the audience where the members all have an opportunity to say something negative about the Lecturer. I ask them to criticize me on my appearance and dress, from nose to toes, my demeanor, teaching style, speech, mannerisms, etc. To get them motivated, I say; "If you have difficulty in finding anything to criticize, make it up." That usually gets them falling all over each other to be first in getting a critique of me going.

Teaching Dialog 1.

A demonstration of the verbal skill of fogging.

Audience: You mumble your words sometimes.

Me: I certainly do. (Fogging)

Audience: You keep forgetting the point you want to make.

Me: I get disorganized, don't I. (Fogging)

Audience: You get so worked up that you start swearing.

Me: That certainly sounds like me, doesn't it? (Fogging)

Audience: Your clothes could be improved.

Me: I agree with you there. (Fogging)

- Audience: That multicolored pink tie is horrible.
- Me: You're right. It sort of looks like my tongue after a bad night. (Fogging)
- Audience: You are really a bad teacher.
- Me: There is no doubt I could improve. (Fogging)
- Audience: I don't think you could improve.
- Me: I don't blame you. Sometimes I feel that way myself. (Fogging)
- Audience: Well, are you going to improve?
- Me: I certainly should try to improve. (Fogging)
- Audience: You have something broken inside your head.
- Me: I probably do. You don't know how many times I've thought that myself. (Fogging)
- Audience: There's got to be something wrong with you.
- Me: I'd bet money on it. (Fogging)
- Audience: You won't take this seriously will you?
- Me: I should take it more seriously than I do. (Fogging)
- Audience: You are just toying with us, aren't you?
- Me: It must seem like that. (Fogging)
- Audience: I don't believe a damn thing you have said.
- Me: I don't blame you. Sometimes I can't believe it myself. (Fogging)
- Audience: You probably don't have many friends.
- Me: That's for sure. (Fogging)
- Audience: You don't even care.
- Me: I care less than I should. (Fogging)
- Audience: You probably have sexual deficits too.
- Me: I insisted upon them. Why should I be different than any body else. (Fogging)
- Audience: No. I mean sexual deficits that you are ashamed of.
- Me: I certainly should be ashamed of my sexual deficits. (Fogging)
- Audience: You probably did things in your life that hurt other people.
- Me: Boy, have I ever. (Fogging)
- Audience: You say that like you are proud of it.
- Me: I shouldn't say it like I'm proud of it, shouldn't I? (Fogging)
- Audience: But you don't make it sound negative, like something you should be ashamed of, as it should be.
- Me: I don't do that, do I? (Fogging)

- Audience: You are a psychopath.
- Me: I certainly sound like one at times. (Fogging)
- Audience: I don't mean sound like. I mean you are.
- Me: Whatever fits is fine. Psychopath is good. Works for me. (Fogging)
- Audience: You are disgusting.
- Me: That's okay too. Disgusting is good. (Fogging)
- Audience: You seem thick. Like you don't understand what we are getting at.
- Me: I probably don't. (Fogging)
- Audience: There has to be something wrong with you.
- Me: Pick an aspect you don't like. I'm sure it's wrong. (Fogging)
- Audience: You are a phony.
- Me: I can certainly go with that. Many times I think I'm not real. (Fogging)
- Audience: You are certainly slick.
- Me: I probably am too slick for my own good. (Fogging)
- Audience: You aren't sincere.
- Me: I'm probably more insincere than I should be. (Fogging)
- Audience: I can't put my finger on what's really wrong with you.
- Me: My sympathy. I have the same problem. (Fogging)
- Audience: You are not honest.
- Me: You got me there. I should be more honest. (Fogging)
- Audience: You are corrupt inside.
- Me: I'll go for that. And outside too. (Fogging)
- Audience: You try too hard to be cute and sarcastic.
- Me: I certainly do. I shouldn't try so hard. (Fogging)
- Audience: You are insecure and use Fogging to hide your insecurity.
- Me: I'll go along with that. Sounds fine to me. (Fogging)
- Audience: That's just glossing over a real personal problem.
- Me: I probably am. (Fogging)
- Audience: Then one of these days it will catch up with you because you haven't seen an analyst to cure it.
- Me: You're probably right. That may happen. (Fogging)
- Audience: You have a can of worms inside you don't want to look at.
- Me: I probably do. (Fogging)
- Audience: I'll bet you're pussy whipped.
- Me: I'd bet so too. (Fogging)
- Audience: Don't you care about yourself being a real man?

- Me: I probably don't care as much as you do. (Fogging)
- Audience: You don't know how to be a real man.
- Me: That's for sure. I don't know what a real man is. (Fogging)
- Audience: You are unattractive socially.
- Me: I feel that way too. (Fogging)
- Audience: You are unattractively personally.
- Me: Sometimes I don't even like myself. (Fogging)
- Audience: You are unattractive sexually. (Fogging)
- Me: I must be. I certainly don't turn myself on. (Fogging)
- Audience: You have a personality fault.
- Me: I'll buy that. (Fogging)
- Audience: You are uncultured.
- Me: That does describe me. (Fogging)
- Audience: You are a coward.
- Me: Tell me something I don't know. (Fogging)
- Audience: You are insensitive.
- Me: I feel like that myself sometimes. (Fogging)
- Audience: You are an impulsive, uncontrolled zealot.
- Me: I certainly do things without thinking and disregard every one else's point of view. (Fogging)
- Audience: You get too emotional.
- Me: I certainly do at times. (Fogging)
- Audience: You are a charlatan, not practicing an honest profession.
- Me: I always feel like I'm living by my wits. (Fogging)
- Audience: Except for a few flashes in the pan, your life has been a big failure.
- Me: I've wondered about that myself. (Fogging)
- Audience: You are pretentious, acting above your social position.
- Me: I have always acted above my social position. It's more fun that way. (Fogging)
- Audience: You are irreverent towards everything.
- Me: I should be more reverent than I am. (Fogging)
- Audience: This whole demonstration is sophomoric.
- Me: It certainly is, Ollie. (Fogging)
- Audience: You are too pedantic. You should loosen up.
- Me: I am more uptight and rigid than I should be. (Fogging)
- Audience: There is no doubt that you are a pervert.
- Me: I can certainly agree with that. I don't follow the norm, and I take perverse pleasure out of it. (Fogging)

Audience: You are not put together very well psychologically.
Me: I always thought that whoever did it could have done a better job. (Fogging)
Audience: You are too placid and dull.
Me: I think that myself sometimes.
Audience: You are too frenetic and busy.
Me: That too. (Fogging)
Audience: You are a klutz. Physically and mentally.
Me: You hit the nail right on the head. Sometimes I wonder how I get to work in the morning. (Fogging)
Audience: You are dishonest and devious.
Me: Yes. That bothered me for a long time. (Fogging)
Audience: You are a quitter, no guts and stick-to-it-iveness.
Me: I certainly don't last as long as I would like to. (Fogging)
Audience: You're probably impotent and try to hide it.
Me: Hide what?
Audience: Hide your impotence.
Me: I would certainly try to hide something like that. (Fogging)
Audience: You are avoiding comment upon being impotent.
Me: You're right. (Fogging)
Audience: Well are you impotent or not?
Me: I'm certainly not as potent as I would like. (Fogging)
Audience: You are probably gay too.
Me: That would be just my luck. (Fogging)
Audience: I say that because women don't like you.
Me: There certainly are a lot of them that don't. (Fogging)
Audience: You are indecisive.
Me: Well maybe..., but then again..., maybe not. (Fogging)

As you can see, learning possible Fogging responses like those above place you into the position of a psychological adult; someone who is not threatened by negatives, criticism, or contradictions. What you use as your Fogging response doesn't have to be as stereotyped or simple as, "You may be right." It can be, at times when you don't have to be dead serious, as humorous as you want it to be. And as you can see from the above dialog, the practiced use of Fogging (and later, Negative Assertion) is indeed, a psychological equivalent to an inoculation, giving one immunity to a general anxiety/defensiveness "infection." The practice of Fogging gives the user a particular attitude or viewpoint about one's self

in relation to the vicissitudes and vagaries of life. This attitude is not a cynical "I don't give a damn", but a much more confident "I've been around the block a few times, therefore whatever you throw at me is not going to be either new or upsetting. I can deal with it — maybe even have fun with it. Something which would likely devastate someone not having this learning experience." In short, the practice of Fogging leads back to being one's own judge as a psychological adult, allowing us to make a thinking cortex response to criticism (or our personal faults and negatives) instead of an automatic, involuntary, emotional, and therefore usually ineffective one prompted by our midbrain.

Now let's look at a dialog specifically set up to prompt the ex-POW how to get a handle on his automatic defensive response. The particular critiques and learner responses in the next illustrative dialog could be taken from any of thousands of actual dialogs generated in teaching people not to be defensive, through prompting insight on not having to be protective of one's insecurities through the use of Fogging and/or Negative Self Assertion.

Verbal Behavior Therapy Dialog 2.

Teaching an ex-POW not to be so defensive and prompting him to ask himself the meaningful, insightful question of "Why am I automatically doing this?"

- Me: I want to teach you how to deal with criticism so that it doesn't bother you in the future.
- Ex-POW: It doesn't bother me now.
- Me: You were just given the lecture material and the demo of Fogging. Was what you just said a Fogging response?
- Ex-POW: It was the truth.
- Me: So you want to do this the hard way.
- Ex-POW: I'm not going to lie to you.
- Me: Okay, let's do it the hard way. You are a really dumb ass with sand for brains.
- Ex-POW: No need to get unfriendly.
- Me: Yes there is, as long as you want to play as if you are a dumb ass with sand for brains.
- Ex-POW: Why do you say that? I'm being reasonable.
- Me: No, you're not. You just reneged on an agreement to learn how to Fog by going through a practice procedure where I would criticize you and you would give me back your best

Fogging response. Or have I had I suddenly become delusional?

Ex-POW: No, I agreed to that.

Me: So why did I have the perception of you as a dumb ass with sand for brains?

Ex-POW: I agree I didn't practice (Fogging), but I don't like being called a dumb ass with sand for brains.

Me: Correction. Not "I agree I didn't practice." That sounds too passive. Let's make it a bit more upright with; (Fogging) "You're right. I didn't practice."

Ex-POW: You're right. I didn't practice. (Fogging) But I still don't like being called a dumb ass with sand for brains.

Me: You were Marines?

Ex-POW: No, Army.

Me: Then just think of me as your Basic Training Drill Instructor. Didn't he tell you things like that?

Ex-POW: Yes, but I still don't like it.

Me: Okay, let's save that for later. We will work on your clothes first.

Ex-POW: Okay.

Me: That shirt looks like you slept in it.

Ex-POW: Okay, that doesn't bother me.

Me: You had better come up with a Fogging response or I'm going to sound like your D.I. again.

Ex-POW: Okay. You're right; it does look like I slept in it. (Fogging)

Me: I could make some remarks on what else you used it for before you put it on this morning.

Ex-POW: You're right. It does look pretty grubby (Fogging), (then getting defensive again) but it's the heat. I've been sweating all day here out in the valley. It must be a hundred outside.

Me: You were doing fine there until you decided you had to protect your shirt.

Ex-POW: But that's the truth.

Me: Says who?

Ex-POW: It is the truth

Me: You are getting defensive. Who really gives a damn how your shirt looks and how it got that way?

Ex-POW: I do.

Me: Nobody cares what you think.

Ex-POW: Then what am I doing here?

Me: Don't you know?

Ex-POW: I thought I did.

Me: Think about it.

Ex-POW: I'm supposed to practice Fogging the criticism you give me.

Me: Are you supposed to do something else?

Ex-POW: Like what?

Me: Like bitch and moan instead of practicing?

Ex-POW: No.

Me: Correction, try: "No, you're right. I shouldn't bitch and moan instead of practicing.

Ex-POW: You're right. I shouldn't bitch and moan instead of practicing. (Fogging)

Me: All that just to criticize your shirt. Teaching you this is going to take forever.

Ex-POW: You're probably right. (Fogging)

Me: Hey, that's right on the ball.

Ex-POW: Thanks

Me: Correction. You should have said, "I was right on the ball, wasn't I?

Ex-POW: I was right on the ball, wasn't I? (Fogging)

Me: At last, maybe he's got it.

Ex-POW: Got what?

Me: You're dumber than I thought you were.

Ex-POW: I don't like you to say I'm dumb.

Me: Have you had problems in following instructions before? Like at Christmas in putting gifts together for the kids?

Ex-POW: You're just making fun of me.

Me: Why are you rubbing your hands together? Nervous?

Ex-POW: (Pulling hands apart and putting them on his hips) I am not rubbing my hands together.

Me: I beg to differ. You were rubbing your hands together and then put them on your hips... Probably because you don't know what to do and that makes you nervous.

Ex-POW: That's not true... (First denying, then after a pregnant pause) You're right... I was rubbing my hands together. (Fogging N.B. This is about where the typical student asks him or her self that insightful question, "Why am I being so defensive about something silly and of no importance, like rubbing my

hands together?", and gets no satisfactory answer.)

Me: It seems that you have got it.

Ex-POW: You're right. I think so too. (Fogging)

Me: And you were going to deny an innocent, innocuous behavior of rubbing your hands together.

Ex-POW: (Not in the least defensive) Yes, I was, wasn't I? (Fogging)

Me: And you didn't want to admit that you were nervous underneath, did you?

Ex-POW: You got it chief! (Fogging)

N.B. After gaining insight on not having to be automatically defensive any more about possible personal negatives, the typical learner takes no small joy in Fogging with a light hearted vengeance.

Me: And you automatically stopped rubbing your hands together and put them on your hips.

Ex-POW: You're right. That's exactly what I did. Silly of me, wasn't it? (Fogging)

Me: I don't suppose there really is any point now of accusing you of being a dumb ass with sand for brains, is there?

Ex-POW: No, that's okay. Sometimes I really act like a dumb ass with sand for brains just like my Drill Instructor said. (Fogging)

Me: Okay, let's just recap. Your shirt looks like you washed it in camel piss before you put it on today.

Ex-POW: It sure does, and smells like it too. (Fogging)

Me: Those pants you got on look like you borrowed them from a homeless person.

Ex-POW: Sure do, don't they? (Fogging)

Me: And those shoes... Have you ever heard of a concept called shoe polish?

Ex-POW: They look like I never did, right? (Fogging)

Me: Now let's start working on the person who looks like this, okay?

Ex-POW: You probably should. Ha-ha. (Projected Fogging)

Me: You should be disgusted with yourself dressing as you do.

Ex-POW: I probably should. (Fogging)

Me: Sloppy clothes usually mean a sloppy mind.

Ex-POW: They certainly do. (Fogging)

Me: You are probably depressed.

Ex-POW: I probably am. (Fogging)

- Me: Unmotivated.
Ex-POW: That's for sure. (Fogging)
Me: And you were a total dork before.
Ex-POW: I certainly was. (Fogging)
Me: That doesn't even bother you now.
Ex-POW: You're right. (Fogging)
Me: You've got a lot of bad habits and faults.
Ex-POW: That's right. (Fogging)
Me: And you haven't taken any responsibility for correcting them.
Ex-POW: (Loosing it momentarily) How could I... (then responding thoughtfully instead of emotionally) You're right. I didn't do a damn thing to correct my faults. (Fogging)
Me: Maybe we should look at your faults and see if we can deal with them in the same way you used Fogging to deal with critique?
Ex-POW: Okay.

That training dialog practice sequence is typical of thousands of students learning how to replace an automatic, emotionally prompted defensive response with a thought prompted Fogging response. In eliminating defensiveness by extinguishing negative emotions with Fogging, the procedure appears to be one of eliminating the negative reaction to sore points in one's makeup, and the elimination of such negatives prompting "insight" into why one is unnecessarily being defensive. In physiological terms, without a strong negative emotional response active, the cortex (insight) function will dominate the emotional midbrain, the mediator of all emotional responses, including being defensive. In short, with one shot at the negative emotional reactions, you hit two targets, the negative reaction as well as the defensive reaction the emotional reactions produce. So one sure way to systematically eliminate defensiveness in talk psychotherapy is to aim for the negative emotional reactions in situations that produce defensiveness.

In the early days of using Fogging to teach people one part of assertiveness, a lack of emotional response to manipulative criticism, I noted that about ninety-five percent of the learners practicing Fogging for the first time, gained insight into their own defensiveness during the first training hour on Fogging with about twenty minutes of actual practice. They could appropriately deal with critique, acknowledge and agree with it, thereby not getting bogged down in denial and defensiveness, preventing their being assertive. The remaining five percent who practiced how

to Fog and did not gain insight were still too cautious and tentative in their use of Fogging. They learned that Fogging was very useful in dealing with critical manipulation, but were very uncomfortable in accepting criticism as if someone "higher up" was really checking up on them. Even with knowing this insight was gained by others, seeing it happen before their own eyes, they did not feel free to cut themselves some negative slack. When criticized for a possible personal fault, they would, or could not, give their critic the benefit of a doubt about themselves. They would Fog the criticism, in an argumentative way; i.e., "I'm sure you (the critic) feel that I am _____" (* alternative; dumb, sick, sexless, perverse, forgetful, stubborn, resistant to learn new things about myself, etc.); which can be interpreted as just as defensive as denial, but at least more civilized and adult. I did not insist that these learners gain that most valuable insight about themselves — "I need not be defensive about anything I am or do; my mistakes, faults and failures." I was happy that they could deal with critique, even in their less productive, argumentative way, for without Fogging practice, they could not cope at all with personal criticism.

Dealing with critique of your own personal negatives which you know to be true — Negative Self Assertion

As I pointed out before, Fogging is a response which is based upon a judgment of the probability of something being negative, or not. The student learns to separate the objective statement of what behavior has occurred from a value judgment of its negativity — is it wrong, morally, technically, etc.? On the other hand, Negative Assertion works on the assumption that — both you and your critic, your mother, your father, your boss, your kids, other people, according to a philosophical value system, religionism, secularism, capitalism, socialism, Zen Buddhism, cubism, impressionism, etc. — all judge your mistake or fault as negative. There is no probability estimate of it being negative — all agree it is negative! The easiest way to understand Negative Assertion is to characterize it as a verbal skill for coping with mistakes. However to just use mistakes as an example is too limiting. Its name is Negative Self Assertion and the operative word is negative. It means just what it says. Any negative will do; a fault, a deficit, a personality lack, a physical attribute not quite up to snuff, a mental aberration, a less than intelligent decision, etc.

We can make a real distinction between Fogging and Negative Self Assertion in dealing with faults and mistakes. The Negative Self Assertion response to being critiqued for a mistake is not "You may be right." It is "You are right." Or as I prefer my students to say emphatically in getting used to dealing with personal faults, "Damned right" or even using our nineteen sixties affirmative, "Right on."

The point of Negative Assertion is to get an emotional handle on personal negatives. These negatives could be about anything — how badly you messed up your last marriage, how you screwed up in front of your boss last month, how you have trouble making friends because you are insecure, how you act bitchy when you don't get your way, how you feel guilty about not trying hard enough to smooth things over with your Mom, how you sometimes rebel and wish you didn't have so damned many responsibilities, like kids, a home to run, maintain, clean or pay for. Those are just the minor personal negatives you don't want to deal with. Your other negatives are at times wishing to do someone else real harm. Or looking at yourself as a real loser, or a helpless, useless person — as someone who never has control over his or her own destiny. Or as someone who is simply mediocre and will never amount to much. All of these abstract, judgmental negatives can be emotionally desensitized using the verbal skills of Fogging and Negative Self Assertion. Once desensitized — the dragon is defanged — you can solve the problems they are blocking you on because you are no longer spending your effort in the problem situation only emotionally reacting to the dragon.

Negatives are curious. If you keep them hidden, they retain their full emotional potency to drive you to despair. However, if negatives are brought out in the open, and psychologically "aired" and examined continuously, they eventually lose all their power to emotionally distress you. You can see how this works in practicing Fogging to desensitize yourself to any possible negatives slung at you by another person. It works the same way in dealing with real personal negatives. Facing them, you can zero your emotional reaction using Negative Self Assertion. Practice with Negative Self Assertion is simple; you agree with any personal negatives tossed at you by a critic, starting with simple mistakes before having to deal with more "serious" negatives involving things such as personal character, integrity, self-worth, etc. A demonstration of Negative Assertion about being tardy can show its simplicity and effectiveness in desensitizing the "guilty" party to his or her negative behavior, but also its positive effect upon the person complaining. The

object of examining Negative assertion used for coping with other people's complaints about your mistakes is to later use this training as a model for desensitizing personal negatives associated with psychological problems. As in the following dialog, without using Negative Assertion, we usually deny the mistake, or try to minimize how serious the mistake is, or withdraw from it by blaming it on someone else.

The results of failing to use Negative Self Assertion

Teaching Dialog 3.

Denying a mistake was made after not picking a friend up on time.

- Critic: Where the hell were you. You're twenty minutes late!!!
Me: I'm late? I got stuck in traffic.
Critic: Stuck in traffic? This is not the rush hour. Look around you. I count five cars going down the street.
Me: Well, I had to go home first.
Critic: Your home is six blocks from here.
Me: What are you getting upset about, it was only twenty minutes.
Critic: Twenty minutes out of my life.
Me: Oh, big deal. It didn't kill you.
Critic: If you say three o'clock I expect three o'clock. not twenty after.
Me: Picky, picky, picky.
Critic: If you're going to pick me up at three-twenty, then damn it, say three-twenty.
Me: You're blowing this all out of proportion. Get a hold of yourself.
Critic: Can't you tell the time?
Me: I think my watch is on the blink. It's not telling the time right. (Holding it to my ear and shaking it.)
Critic: You always make excuses when you do something wrong.
Me: No I don't.
Critic: Yes you do.
Me: Name once.
Critic: I give up on you. You're hopeless.
Me: You're too critical of other people. You ought to look at yourself. You're not perfect.
Critic: Oh, shut up and drive.

This dialog could go on forever, with no resolution. As you can see this is a typical interaction when someone makes a mistake that involves

another person. We engage in this fruitless behavior because of our childish tendency to use denial in dealing with mistakes.

Now let's look at a second training dialog that demonstrates the utility and efficiency of dealing with mistakes using Negative Self Assertion.

Results of using Negative Self Assertion to deal with fault

Teaching Dialog 4.

Using Negative Self Assertion to deal with a mistake; not picking a friend up on time.

Me: Hi. I'm here.

Critic: Where the hell have you been? You're twenty minutes late!!!

Me: You're right. I screwed up. (Negative Self Assertion)

Critic: You were supposed to be here twenty minutes ago.

Me: You're absolutely right. I feel bad about letting you sit here.
(Negative Self Assertion)

Critic: You should feel sorry about making me wait.

Me: That too. (Negative Self Assertion)

Critic: Screwed up, huh?

Me: Yup. Screwed up picking you up. (Negative Self Assertion)

Critic: Don't worry about it. It was a pleasant twenty minutes.

This is a very short dialog because that's all it usually takes to deal with someone's anger over your mistake. The angry response you usually get in making a mistake that affects someone else is an anticipation of hearing a denial, as in the first of these two dialogs about picking a friend up. When you don't deny, you typically get a sigh of relief from the other person rather than anger. Never the less, we really want to use Negative Assertion (in conjunction with Fogging) to teach our ex-POW, as well as yourself, how to deal with personal negatives. As before, we start in the shallow end of the pool, so to speak, by dealing with mistakes. When Negative Assertion is understood, practiced and accepted, we can use both Fogging and Negative Assertion to deal with more serious personal negatives involved in psychological problems such as character faults, deficits, etc. In the following dialog, our ex-POW and I discuss his mistakes, and later, his character and personal faults.

Verbal Behavior Therapy Dialog 5.

Using Negative Assertion to cope with run of the mill mistakes of an ex Korean War POW, leading up to more serious personal negatives.

- Me: So you understood the demonstration dialogs using Negative Assertion for coping better with mistakes?
- Ex-POW: I think so.
- Me: What's a mistake you made just last week.
- Ex-POW: I dinged the car.
- Me: What kind of car and where?
- Ex-POW: Volvo. In the rear left fender. I backed into a shopping cart. Dinged the hell out of it.
- Me: Okay. Let's see... Boy! Did you see what some jerk did to the back fender of the Volvo. Smashed the hell out of it.
- Ex-POW: That was me. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: That was you?
- Ex-POW: Yes it was me. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: How the hell could you do something like that?
- Ex-POW: I don't know. Just lucky I guess.
- Me: I want to talk serious about the car getting smashed up and you decide it's funny.
- Ex-POW: You're right. I am inappropriate at times. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: Well?
- Ex-POW: Well what?
- Me: What are you going to do about the Volvo?
- Ex-POW: Nothing to do. I dinged it. I'll have to live with it or get it fixed. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: What's the worst mistake you made all year?
- Ex-POW: I made a mistake on my tax return. Forgot to include some income.
- Me: How much?
- Ex-POW: \$7,000
- Me: My God. How could you forget that much? That was really dumb!
- Ex-POW: Don't I know it. (Negative Self Assertion) Now I'm paying interest and penalties up the kazoo.
- Me: They are going to watch you like a hawk from now on.
- Ex-POW: Tell me about it. If only I could go back and redo it. (Negative Self Assertion)

- Me: They will probably audit you every year from now on.
- Ex-POW: What do you want from me on this, regrets written in blood?
- Me: That didn't sound like a Negative Assertion.
- Ex-POW: You're right. I lost it there. That was stupid of me. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: Let's have a list of your mistakes.
- Ex-POW: The biggest one was my first marriage. I really blew that one. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: Some of the mistakes in the marriage?
- Ex-POW: I got jealous and thought she was fooling around with a neighbor. So I went over there and accused him of it.
- Me: Whether or not she was fooling around, that was dumb. He might have shot you.
- Ex-POW: I didn't think about that till later.
- Me: It sounds like you didn't think much at all.
- Ex-POW: I don't think I did any thinking then. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: Only a dumb ass with no smarts could screw a marriage up that way. (N.B. the trick in desensitizing one to personal negatives is to learn to use Negative Self Assertion in the face of unsympathetic, derisive, even hostile characterization of a self-accusatory personal negative. A similar characterization of the personal negative causes the learner to withdraw from his or her environment and triggers the psychological problem in the first place.)
- Ex-POW: You are one hundred percent right on that one. I couldn't have gotten any worse if I tried. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: You probably didn't think things out before you acted.
- Ex-POW: That's for sure. Just went on a gut reaction instead of thinking first. Sand for brains. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: You probably do that a lot in other areas of your life; not think things out and then do something, or not do something, you regret.
- Ex-POW: That's the story of my life. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: You probably coped like that a lot when you were a young man. Just automatically deny and not think.
- Ex-POW: I probably did. (Fogging)
- Me: No, I'm not talking about probably. I mean you denied things instead of using your brain about them. You likely did this

because you were anxious, scared and didn't know what to do.

Ex-POW: I don't know. Like when?

Me: How about in the army?

Ex-POW: Maybe..., but I don't think so.

Me: Maybe??? That doesn't sound like a Negative Self Assertion. Are you telling me that you were Mister Intellectual Cool in the army and never got anxious or scared and didn't know what to do?

Ex-POW: Now that you remind me, I can think of a couple of times that happened. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: Like?

Ex-POW: The first time I met my D.I. He didn't like me and made me crawl around the barracks. Ruined my brass belt buckle. Scared the crap out of me when he first braced me to attention. I thought he was going to beat the hell out of me. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: So you emotionally crumpled at the first indication your D.I. didn't like you? Doesn't sound like much personal stamina to me. Or as they used to say at Ft. Ord, "No balls."

Ex-POW: (Thoughtfully) You're right, I didn't like that aspect about myself. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: What else?

Ex-POW: The next time was when the training C.O. told us that the fish we were fed for lunch in the field that day may have been contaminated. He thought that might have been the cause of all the bodies being hauled off by ambulances. That scared the hell out of me. (Negative Assertion)

Me: Getting scared just because they were dropping like flies around you is no great recommendation of your personal emotional stability. If you used your head you could have seen then that you would have been sick already like the others if you were going to get sick.

Ex-POW: Yeah. If I wasn't so anxious, I could have seen that and saved myself from feeling like a scared wimp. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: In both those situations you reacted stupidly, like someone who doesn't know how to think things out on his feet.

Ex-POW: That description fits what I did to a T. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: Were you like that in Korea?

Ex-POW: No, I was real Gung Ho.

Me: Even in the POW camp?

Ex-POW: I was Gung Ho until I was captured and put in the camp. Then every thing changed and nothing made sense any more.

Me: You weren't supposed to figure out what happened so it did make sense?

Ex-POW: I sure as hell wish I could have made sense out of it. After a while, I just said to hell with it all and gave up trying. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: That doesn't say much about you. Just giving up.

Ex-POW: I'm not particularly proud of that. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: What else did you give up on, besides trying to make sense out of it all?

Ex-POW: Trusting the other guys. I thought we were in the same army together, and you had to trust them to be able to survive if anything went wrong — that they would not let you down. Was I stupid! I was a jerk believing that. It pissed me off. It was like I was the only one who believed that, and nobody bothered to tell me what the new rules were. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: What were the new rules?

Ex-POW: Every man for himself. Hooray for me and screw you.

Me: What did that mean?

Ex-POW: It meant that if someone else needed your help, screw him. He wouldn't help you.

Me: You did that???

Ex-POW: That's right. God forgive me, I could have tried to help some of those sick guys and maybe they wouldn't have died. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: What's that make you feel about yourself?

Ex-POW: Talk about sick. It makes me think I was sick in the head. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: Oddly enough, that's one of the most common things people say about themselves when they have a psychological problem.

Ex-POW: Well sure as dogs have fleas, I have a big problem about what happened in that POW camp. I could have done something, maybe made a difference, but I didn't. (Negative Self

Assertion)

Me: It just so happens that nowadays we have a psychological flea collar that works. Let me describe what it can do.

After this dialog, I would describe brainwashing to the ex-POW and place what happened to him in perspective according to what actually happened to him in Korea in a psychological and environmental sense. I would also describe what a psychological problem really is and what it takes to get rid of it. The procedure is so painless, and quick, once a learner has gained insight into being automatically defensive. Then he and I could proceed in a very detailed dialog to extinguish whatever anxieties and other personal negatives relating to the Korean POW camps remained. We could do this in a very simple way; Him doing some homework before the next learning session to rank order a listing of as many anxiety producing negatives as he could recall. After that we would proceed to desensitize him to each of these negatives. If he remembered some six months later, he could eliminate their impact with a friend. He wouldn't need me once he knew how to administer his own psychological booster inoculation using Fogging and Negative Assertion to these newly discovered negatives..

Once these negatives no longer produced negative emotions, he would be free to share what had happened to him in Korea with anyone, without being paralyzed by, or automatically running from it. In short, he would no longer have a psychological problem about having been a Korean POW — just a practical one of having been a pawn in a barbaric use (brainwashing) of the Environmental Laws of Psychology.

Belief Inquiry — What you do when you haven't a clue what specifically triggers feeling so bad about a situation

Repression of the negatives life presents us all is really not accurately representative of the coping style of the human species. Contrary to what early clinicians like Freud found, the real problem is getting rid of personal negatives and their effects upon us, not discovering them to see what is really bothering us (see Elizabeth Loftus, The Myth of Repressed Memory, in References.) The primitive way we avoid them is to withdraw from the stimulus situation that causes us problems — sort of a functional phobic response. Trauma research in the past decade as well as clinical behavior studies of anxiety and phobias over the past 70 years indicate that once we gain a conditioned or learned anxiety response we

do not lose it simply as a function of passage of time without some re-conditioning or other ameliorating process, nor do we forget it. The problem is more getting rid of the negative reactions that bother us rather than finding out what they are.

Never-the-less, our thinking about things emotional is not always crystal clear. Some of us still have difficulty pinpointing the specifics necessary to extinguish our emotional reactions to exactly those negative stimuli that produce them. One means of rapidly isolating the negatives causing the problem is the negative half of the verbal skill of Belief Inquiry. Prior to applying the behavioral verbal techniques to eliminating our emotional reaction to real life negatives, let's briefly look at how to more clearly specify what those abstract negatives are that cause us so much trouble. Let's start with the following example of when I was an intern with Zev Wanderer, the master clinician who taught me behavioral psychotherapy.

One of my first clients was a young man who was slightly retarded mentally. But his lack of mental sophistication didn't mean he couldn't figure things out given time. I was teaching him how to get over his shyness with girls. He was good looking and pleasant, but totally lacking in experience. He said he just didn't know what to do, or even how to say hello. So I took him over to the clinic window as Zev would have and pointed down to a bus stop on Wilshire Blvd. in Beverly Hills. I said, "You see that girl down there waiting for a bus? He said, "Sure." So I said, "When you are about to leave, wait until one like that is standing there waiting for the bus. Walk over and 'accidentally' step on her foot. Then apologize profusely, introduce yourself, and offer to buy her a cup of coffee to make up for your clumsy stupidity. Use those words — a little creative use of Negative Assertion." He knew what I was talking about because I had been teaching him how to be assertive with other people for the last eight weeks. He waited until he saw a likely candidate to practice on, went down, performed perfectly, took her to a café down the street, and struck up a friendship that eventually evolved into a dating relationship. A great success? Yes, but not initially. A couple of weeks into his training, he came back into the clinic depressed and upset with what we were doing. When I asked what the problem was, he told me that when he practiced with me to be assertive, it worked perfectly. He could handle all the negatives I threw at him. But when he went out in the real world and tried to assertively practice with other people who were not like me, they gave him negatives in a style he didn't expect or

know how to deal with, flustering him and causing him to retreat. So I had him compile all the negatives the other people used that upset him, as well as put him in an assertive training group where he could practice with other clients who were "safe," but unlike me and could give him unexpected negatives to practice coping with.

In helping him compile his list of personal negatives, I had the following dialog with him.

Verbal Behavior Therapy Dialog 6.

The use of Negative Inquiry to specify personal negative stimuli.

- Me: What is it about what other people did that upset you?
(NEGATIVE INQUIRY)
- Client: It was all new.
- Me: What is it about being new that was bad? (NEGATIVE INQUIRY)
- Client: I hadn't already practiced for it.
- Me: What was it about not having practiced for it that upset you?
(NEGATIVE INQUIRY)
- Client: I got upset and nervous when I didn't practice for it with you.
- Me: What was it about not having practiced for it that got up upset and nervous? (NEGATIVE INQUIRY)
- Client: I didn't know what to do.
- Me: What was it about not knowing what to do that got you upset and nervous? (NEGATIVE INQUIRY)
- Client: I might get it wrong.
- Me: What was it about you possibly getting it wrong that upset you and made you nervous? (NEGATIVE INQUIRY)
- Client: If I got it wrong and didn't respond in the right way, I would look like a fool.
- Me: What was it about you looking like a fool that was bad?
(NEGATIVE INQUIRY)
- Client: If I looked like a fool, I would feel like a fool.
- Me: What was it about feeling like a fool that was bad?
(NEGATIVE INQUIRY)
- Client: If I felt like a fool, that meant I was a fool. And I don't like being a fool.

That little dialog illustrates the use of Negative Inquiry (one half of Belief Inquiry), a systematic way of determining what negatives may be

impacting upon oneself because of a problem or a life experience. Negative Inquiry teaches one to explore and examine an opinion, or belief that produces that opinion, instead of simply accepting it or fighting it. The belief may be one's own or someone else's. Since Negative Inquiry is not adversary and does not challenge or threaten the person with the belief, it is more likely to prompt him or her to abandon denial or evasion or become defensive and instead, to examine the hidden agenda or want that underlies the particular statement, or opinion produced by the belief held by that person; either yourself or another.

Negative Inquiry was originally developed to deal with critiques given by others in a manipulative way in an effort to emotionally cause you to change your behavior and wants. It was designed to prompt the manipulative person, usually someone close whose opinions would have a significant effect upon you, to examine in some detail the belief(s) which produced that opinion. In the present application with psychological problems, it can be effectively used to elicit negative reactions that make up part of the psychological problem which may not be fully verbalized, and therefore difficult, if not impossible to extinguish. The use of Negative Inquiry both identifies the negative stimuli and negative emotional reactions to them, as well as help extinguish these emotional reactions. In the present case illustrated with the young male client, his un verbalized negatives came from being uneasy about unknown possible putdowns from other "new" people which he was unprepared for, and he had retreated from in the past.

To see how to use Negative Inquiry in dealing with your own negative reactions, particularly those which as yet are not fully verbalized, read the sections on the use of Negative Inquiry in any of the three books, *When I Say No, I Feel Guilty (Volume I)*, *Yes, I Can Say No*, and *When I Say No, I Feel Guilty, Vol. II, for Managers and Executives* (see References.) A synopsis of what is detailed therein is given here.

To teach learners the simple verbal mechanics of Negative Inquiry in my seminars, I get up in front of the class and say, "When you were in the third grade and the teacher came in and said 'Good morning, class,' what did you all say?" The seminar students then all reply in unison, "Good morning teacher!" I then say, "Now you've got it! That's the way you are all going to learn Negative Inquiry. I am going to wander around the room and make judgment statements about objects and people. You will all respond to each of my judgments with Negative Inquiry by asking, 'What is it about [the object or person I have judged] that is bad

[tacky, poor, cruddy]?' For example, if I say, 'This coffee cup is poorly designed,' what would you say?' The class responds in unison, "What is it about the coffee cup that is [or means] it is poorly designed?" The class and I then have the following dialogue.

Teaching Dialogue 7.

A Classroom Demonstration of Coping with Personal Negatives Using Negative Inquiry.

Me: This blackboard is quite poor.

Class: What is it about the blackboard that means it is poor?
[NEGATIVE INQUIRY]

Me: These seats are quite uncomfortable.

Class: What is it about the seats that is uncomfortable? [NEGATIVE INQUIRY]

Me: The lunch we had was terrible.

Class: What is it about the lunch that was terrible? [NEGATIVE INQUIRY]

Me: (Wandering among the students) Bill's mustache is inadequate.

Class: What is it about Bill's mustache that is inadequate? [NEGATIVE INQUIRY]

Me: Nancy's hair is too fussy.

Class: What is it about Nancy's hair that means it's too fussy?
[NEGATIVE INQUIRY]

Me: Nancy's hair is too brown.

Class: What is it about Nancy's hair that means it's too brown?
[NEGATIVE INQUIRY]

Me: (Pointing out that another person's judgment is arbitrary) Nancy's hair is exactly the right color.

Class: What is it about Nancy's hair that means it's exactly the right color? [POSITIVE INQUIRY]

Me: Joe's eyes are too green.

Class: What is it about Joe's eyes that means they're too green?
[NEGATIVE INQUIRY]

Me: Joe's eyes are too close together.

Class: What is it about Joe's eyes that means they are too close together?
[NEGATIVE INQUIRY]

Me: Joe's eyes are too far apart.

Class: What is it about Joe's eyes that means they are too far apart?
[NEGATIVE INQUIRY]

Me: Debbie's dress is not stylish.

Class: What is it about Debbie's dress that means it isn't stylish?
[NEGATIVE INQUIRY]

Me: (Picking up a copy of *When I Say No, I Feel Guilty (Vol. I)* to point out that assertive inquiry into a judgment - opinion can be either positive or negative) This book is fantastic!

Class: What is it about that book that means it's fantastic? [POSITIVE INQUIRY]

Me: Bunny is so sexy.

Class: What is it about Bunny that means she's so sexy? (POSITIVE or NEGATIVE INQUIRY)

Me: This class is really unsophisticated.

Class: What is it about us that means we are unsophisticated?
[NEGATIVE INQUIRY]

Me: This Negative Inquiry routine you are using is a real pain.

Class: What is it about our using Negative Inquiry that is a real pain?
[NEGATIVE INQUIRY]

Me: You just won't buy anything I say without questioning it.

Class: What is it about our not buying anything you say without questioning it that makes it a real pain? (NEGATIVE INQUIRY)

Me: I have to think about what I'm saying.

Class: What is it about having to think about what you are saying that is a real pain?

Me: Okay, class. Terrific job!

Class: What is it about the job we did that was terrific?

When a learner responds to criticism based upon someone's judgment or opinion with an inquiry like "What is it about the way I perform my job that is bad?" he or she is really asking, in a non-defensive and non-antagonistic way, "What is your belief about my job performance that makes it bad?" In teaching Belief Inquiry in my seminars, I stress to the trainees, "When you negatively or positively inquire about someone's opinion, don't automatically accept what the other person tells you just because it seems to make sense, and then stop your inquiry. Don't allow an agreement with your own personal belief system stop your inquiry. When you inquire about an opinion, reserve your own judgment about it until your critic gives you no more information, or finally stops being manipulative and gives you an emotional response such as 'Well, dammit, that's just the way I see it!' Also, don't respond with 'What makes

you think ... is bad?' That will be taken as a sarcastic disagreement. Just pretend you are a neutral visitor from Mars who hasn't the slightest idea of what his/her critic is talking about. One who hasn't visited here since people were walking around wrapped in what looked like colorful bedspreads, and you are taking a survey to update your files. You want to find out what people believe and what they base their opinions on."

Belief Inquiry, either negative or positive, into another person's judgment does three things for you. First, it gives you something meaningful and productive to say in response to criticism, consequently lowering any anxiety the criticism may have caused. Second, it prompts the person who offers the critical judgment to examine the basis of that judgment. Third, Belief Inquiry allows you to think about the criticism and make your own informed judgment about it based upon the inquiry — i.e., to reject it, if manipulative, or to accept it, if constructive and helpful.

When dealing with personal negatives that are linked to a psychological problem, the same factors are in operation. First, Negative Inquiry tends to automatically lower the anxiety one feels about personal negatives as the process of inquiring about them takes place. Second, it prompts you to examine the underlying belief that causes the particular result of the environmental change to be judged as "negative." This technique allows you to examine your superego in detail. Third, Belief Inquiry allows you to identify and then accept the negative about you, or to realize that it is spurious or totally ridiculous. In either case the emotional reaction to the negative is lowered, and can be eliminated later using the verbal skills of Fogging and or Negative Assertion.

Now let's look at some examples of using Negative Inquiry to specify exactly what is triggering off negative emotional reactions in a psychological problem situation. To start with, let's look at the amusing problem I had as a teenager in trying to relate to girls. As you recall from Chapter One, as a fifteen year old, I didn't know what to believe after I had seen teenage girls display obvious sexual interest in boys, and then later in the same day with some other girls, the very opposite — negative sexual interest in myself.

Very briefly, I had a problem because my belief that teenage girls were not interested in sex didn't work, but a belief that teenage girls were interested in sex didn't work either. Consequently, I felt resentful, foolish and anxious about relating to girls. Let's look at the use of Negative Inquiry in the following demonstration dialog in an effort to get me to be a bit more specific in isolating what triggered off my feelings in that

situation to see if something could be done about it.

Teaching Dialog 8.

The use of Negative Inquiry in specifying what personal negatives are in effect for me as a naïve teenage boy, starting with the statement I had made that I felt foolish, resentful and anxious about relating to teenage girls. The dialog is between Me1, a fifteen year old, and Me2, a clinical psychologist.

Me2: What is it about relating to girls that makes you feel resentful?
(NEGATIVE INQUIRY)

Me 1: I feel like someone has run a number on me — Has not been honest in relating to me.

Me2: What is it about someone not being honest with you that makes you feel resentful? (NEGATIVE INQUIRY)

Me 1: It's like I'm being honest and aboveboard, but they are not.

Me2: What is it about them not being honest and aboveboard while you are that makes you feel resentful? (NEGATIVE INQUIRY)

Me 1: It's like I don't count. Therefore it doesn't matter if they are honest with me or not.

Me2: What is it about you not counting or being so insignificant that you don't matter which makes you feel resentful? (NEGATIVE INQUIRY)

Me1: If I don't matter to them then what am I?

Me2: What is it about you not mattering to them that makes you question what or who you are? (NEGATIVE INQUIRY)

Me 1: I guess that means that who I am depends upon if I matter to them or not.

Me2: That seems like a personal negative to me.

Me 1: It does to me also.

Me2: So it really has nothing to do with sex at all, does it?

Me 1: No, it has to do with personal worth. Does my personal worth depend upon them — or me?

Me2: Who decides the answer to that question?

Me 1: It had better be me!

Me2: Do we need to inquire on what makes you feel foolish around teenage girls?

Me 1: Same thing.

Me2: How about anxious?

Me 1 Ditto. Job done.

As you can see, the use of Negative Inquiry in specifying personal negatives and their triggers, what one needs to be desensitized to, can be quite useful and productive. Before turning to case examples, let's examine how you can determine, simply and easily, how negative your reaction to a personal factor is, or how well you have extinguished it.

The second rule in using psychological penicillin — How to tell if what you are using works to get rid of your personal negatives

To successfully follow this emotional relearning procedure, we would have to first set up a subjective check to see if it was actually working as we went along. As you can see for yourself when you try it, your emotional reaction to negatives will lower directly according to how much practice over time you get in exposing yourself to environmental negatives as well as personal negatives using Fogging or Negative Assertion, or both. It would be helpful to see how you are doing if we had some way of assessing your emotional reaction to these negatives at the beginning of each learning practice, several estimates during the practice, and a final assessment of negative emotion at the end of the practice. If things are going as predicted, you should see a higher assessment at the start, lower ones spaced along the progress of the practice, and the lowest assessment near the end. Luckily, we do have something that is just the ticket for our purpose. It is called the SUDS level, or Subjective Units of Discomfort Scale.

Using the SUDS level is simple. Since it is a subjective scale, you won't find it inscribed on a platinum bar at the National Bureau of Weights, Measures and Standards. Never the less, it is reliable and easy to use. Your assessments of your state on this scale of discomfort will be fairly accurate and reliable from one assessment to another. Let me describe this very useful assessment tool for you. Picture a scale going from zero at the bottom to 100 at the top; for example, try picturing a thermometer going from zero to 100 degrees. Zero means the most relaxed and comfortable you can be. Picture yourself just before you fall asleep at night. That's zero negativity, discomfort, anxiety and SUDS level. At the other end of the scale, picture yourself running down the hall at work screaming, "The _____* are coming. The _____* are coming. (* alternatives: Martians, Russians, IRS, Klingons, British, my

Mother In Law, etc.) " That panic state is a one hundred SUDS level.

To get used to taking your SUDS level, close your eyes. Then decide between zero to one hundred, what your SUDs level is right now as you are reading this book. For most people it would range somewhere between five and thirty-five. Write that number down as your operant (how you normally operate) base level of SUDS with no stress applied. When you have done that, then close your eyes and think of a situation that comes up regularly — once a week or month — and bothers you somewhat. Write that situation down as a moderate SUDS level. Next close you eyes again and think back to a situation during the last six months that really bothered you. Give yourself a SUDS level rating on how uncomfortable you felt during that situation. Write that down as a major SUDS level. These three readings of your SUDS level, low, medium and high can be used as your personal, standard comparisons to reliably rate your emotional discomfort in any situation you encounter in the future.

With this minimal practice, you are ready to use the SUDS level as a check of your success in practicing with someone you trust, using either the verbal skill methods just described. You can use both these verbal skill methods and the SUDS level rating to work on any of your negatives. But, before you get into that on your own with a friend, I suggest that you read the many dialogs given in the next set of chapters, describing the deconditioning of negatives relating to various psychological problems we all might face. The reason for this priority is that for some few lucky people it is not necessary to initially practice to gain the insight that one does not have to automatically be defensive about one's self, only understand this phenomenon on the intellectual level, and use it when the opportunity arises, but for most of us, the hard way — practice — is what works.

Let's turn now to the following chapter, which presents material representative of most psychological problems of normal people, becoming a psychological adult by cutting the psychological cord between parent and child, especially between mother and daughter.

Chapter Five

Get Past Remove The Dragon Or Remove Yourself, And Learn To Live With Dragons As A Psychological Adult, Especially With Mom

Telegram To Winston Churchill;

*Two opening night tickets reserved in your name for my new play. Bring a friend,
if you have one.*

George Bernard Shaw

Telegram to George Bernard Shaw;

*Can't make opening night. Reserve two seats for second night,
if you have one.*

Winston Spencer Churchill

Winston Churchill had a private reputation of being tough as nails in doing things politically, no matter who's ox got gored. George Bernard Shaw referred to this private side of Churchill years before he became Prime Minister in his witty and sarcastic invitation to the opening of his new play. During WWII, he alone had to make the decision to allow German bombers to level the town of Coventry after British Intelligence had intercepted a coded message revealing the German bombers' plans. To do otherwise would have revealed that British Intelligence had broken the assumedly impregnable German communications code. Coventry, unfortunately, was leveled. The ability to accept criticism of his negative qualities without blinking an eye gave Churchill great ease in using his thinking mind, instead of his emotional gut, to form a witty reply to Shaw, as he did repeatedly to his critics who tried to prod him. Churchill seemed to delight in any reference to his human negatives. Lady Astor, a fellow M.P., exasperated in not being able to sway him on a particular political point, once said to him in parliament, "Winston, if I were your wife, I would put poison in your tea." Churchill immediately replied, "Madam, if you were my wife, I would drink it." As we shall see in detail in later chapters on the beliefs, great and small, which automatically steer us, Churchill had mastered being his own judge of himself in everything, including his negative qualities.

Dealing with personal and then environmental negatives uncovered by psychological problems using Fogging and Negative Self Assertion

If I had the power, I would grant to you that remarkable ability and delight that Churchill possessed for routinely dealing with any public examination of his personal negatives — but I must settle for helping you to eliminate or minimize the emotional effect of any personal or environmental negative a psychological problem has revealed to you. If you can learn to Fog and/or Negative assert any of the general critiques given you in the last chapter, you can likely handle any negatives produced by a psychological problem. In this and the next six chapters, I will present teaching dialogs to demonstrate the use of Fogging and Negative Assertion to gain adult psychological control over personal and environmental negatives produced and revealed by psychological problems experienced by perfectly normal people. These are actual dialogs taken from recordings, notes and memory, condensed, compiled and edited for confidentiality, brevity, interest and teaching purposes. To set the stage for the first set of teaching dialogs, we have to briefly look at their basis; the unfortunate over-restriction of the child-parent psychological environment prior to adolescence. In order to understand and recognize the importance of the common thread running through each of these three examples, i.e., a very restricted childhood environment — as the twig is bent, so grows the tree — you and I will look into their case histories in some detail.

Psychological Problem Type I:

Irrational emotional bonds between child and parent, keeping them in child and parent roles and prevent remaking the relationship into that of two adults.

Oddly enough, the psychological problem of non-assertiveness fits under this child-parent, emotional conditioning heading. Being a good, non-assertive child is taught by parents — mostly by Mom — to children to control their behavior without having to need physical restraints. Parents teach children to feel guilty for not doing what other people want, and this early conditioning lasts a lifetime, causing all sorts of difficulty for the now adult child. The emotional manipulator simply takes up the role of surrogate, guilt inducing parent to the non-assertive person about

to be emotionally swindled out of something.

To understand this first set of teaching dialogs, we have to understand the Environmental Law of Emotion and how it explains the major, life-long problem we now clearly see between parent and child reared in a traditional parenting model; strong emotional bonding that is appropriate in childhood, but psychologically destructive as an adult. In short, restricting your psychological payoff environment to one person (as in falling in love; see Chapter Two) sets up an extreme emotional dependency for yourself upon that person. If you are both adult equals, it is called love or in extreme cases, co-dependency, which needs correction of each partner's emotional orientation. However, in the case of parent and child, the dependency is typically one sided. It is also sexist in orientation and goals. About age seven in the traditional family setting, Mom dismisses Junior as inappropriate for her indoctrination and training, but sees daughter as an ideal subject of her enculturation efforts to turn out the perfect young woman, much like herself, or her ideal.

Becoming A Psychological Adult With Your Mother

Fifty years ago in the traditional extended family with many females present, any mistakes or personal biases of Mom, for example, towards cats, beer or football players were corrected by other mature women with different viewpoints on these subjects. Circumstances then kept the child rearing environment from being severely restricted to just daughter and Mom. Daughter got part of her training, social indoctrination, and social reinforcements from a wider set of sources, such as grandmothers, aunts, older sisters and cousins, or neighbors, etc. Consequently, with such an expanded psychological payoff environment, two things typically happened. First, as we can see from what the Environmental Law of Emotion tells us, the emotional bonding between daughter and mother would not be taken to the extreme. Second, with a host of adult women teaching her to look at many different ways of doing things, as the Environmental Law of Expansion tells us, daughter would become used to contradictions, multiple and competing reinforcement sources, and lots of confusion; a very psychologically robust environment in which to grow up. Since the end of WWII, however, the nuclear family has lost most of its extensions. Now-a-days, contemporary mothers have no one but close friends and good neighbors to expand a possible, very restricted payoff environment, which would automatically correct her parenting mistakes with daughter.

This first teaching dialog example is about correcting the limitations that develop in a too close and limited family environment and maturing from a emotionally dependent adolescent into an independent adult. This change can take place fairly rapidly, or it may take years, depending upon how the person maturing decides to deal with family as well as personal negatives. If the maturing person decides to psychologically step back into the family environment and deal with real negatives, the maturation process can be relatively short; months or even weeks. If not, it can take a lifetime. In terms of describing this phenomenon as a psychological problem, let's quickly and briefly go through the five steps that define such a problem.

When the psychological environment between daughter and mother is quite restricted, the relationship develops a strong set of conditioned emotions over the years. The likely steps in developing an emotional problem in the family area are as follows:

1. **Environmental change:** The expansion of the payoff environment comes with the realization that Mom is not the perfect, ideal, wise, all knowing person which daughter had been indoctrinated to believe over the years.
2. **Malfunction of belief:** This expansion usually takes place as a teenager, when intellectual maturity begins to develop and daughter can see the disparities between what she has been indoctrinated to believe and the real world around her. Consequently, her belief that one can always count on what Mom says does not work any more.
3. **Environmental negatives:** Daughter often sees that what Mom does in trying to control daughter's behavior can be very arbitrary and arrogant.
4. **Personal negatives:** In addition, this change in perception reveals personal negatives which most of these daughters would have great difficulty coping with; i.e., that not only are they very angry with Mom, and hate themselves for being so easily upset by Mom, but even hate her at times, or at least hate what she does and how she does it. Daughters also come to the realization at this time that they are relatively powerless to change Mom, whom they love, into someone resembling a more textbook mother, rather than this seemingly obnoxious person they live with. Frequently daughter acts as a wimp, unable, or cowardly unwilling to tell

Mom to back off and behave properly, as they believe a loving and decent mother would. The problem could be resolved within a few days, of course, if daughter and mother would stick it out and deal assertively with their differences and hurts.

5. Denial and/or withdrawal: Unfortunately, all of the women whom I have seen who eventually request psychological help for this relationship problem have first denied that there is a major problem and then have withdrawn from Mom, either physically or psychologically. It is sad to say, but of the women I have known personally as friends or acquaintances, and not as clients, the great majority has had, or still has, this problem because of their *Here Be Dragons* coping.

Let's now specifically look at how Jan, an eighteen year old, coped poorly with her mother's arbitrary indoctrination of her in a very restricted environment. This is what I consider a worst-case situation. Another teaching dialog, which follows, illustrates a less severe mother daughter relationship dysfunction.

Jan's family history was a mess. As any neutral observer will see from her history, Jan had developed a psychological problem in dealing with her family and their treatment of her. The unpredictable environmental change precipitating her problem was the breakup of the family when she turned fifteen. Her father was an alcoholic and a physical child abuser, separated from the family at that time. Contrary to the facts, her malfunctioning, midbrain belief on how families should operate told her that her parents truly loved her and she could count on them for help and emotional support. As the family bonds deteriorated with time, Jan's mother coped worse with adversity and stress. Consequently, Jan substituted for Mom in taking care of the other, younger three kids to the point of relieving Mom of almost all responsibility. Jan's life, basically, was to go to school, clean the house, take care of her siblings, cook meals, and find time to do her homework before going to bed. On weekends she washed clothes and supervised the kids playing. She had no friends.

As time went on, the environmental negatives generated by this dysfunctional family, become clearer to the dispassionate observer. Mom, and sometimes Dad on visits, related to Jan as if she were hired help. Eventually, even her birthdays were not acknowledged. If Jan needed something for herself, it always seemed to turn out that there was some pressing reason why she could not get what she desired, or needed. There was "no money for gas" to take her somewhere in the car. It

would "take too long" to do something. The people Jan needed help from were "feeling poorly," etc.

When she was 18, Jan was living apart from Mom and family because a) she could no longer cope with her family, and b) she could no longer use denial as a protective, emotional device for what was going on, day by day, if she were to remain in that negative family environment. So she withdrew from the family setting and the environmental negatives therein, lived with a friend, worked part time to support herself and still went to her final year of high school. There she was able to maintain her denial and rationalize why she had been and still was being treated poorly. She used the same excuses as her family used; they didn't have enough money; they didn't have enough time; the car needed work and couldn't make a long drive; and so forth, and so on, etc., etc., etc. Her withdrawal from her family protected her from needing to answer questions about some weighty personal negatives implicit in the fact that no adult in her family showed they cared for her or were in the least concerned about her welfare; i.e., "What kind of person am I if my whole family treats me like dirt or even worse, like a nobody?" Consequently, because these conditions satisfied all five steps in the etiology of a psychological problem, I knew what to do to help her resolve it.

At this time Jan was in a therapy group that met once a week. For months she refused to join in the group process for, as we found out later, a variety of negative reasons. Finally, one evening I refused to let her off the hook without participating. Basically I asked her how she could expect to resolve anything if she still had these rotten feelings about her recent home life which she alternately complained about and then would deny had caused her any problem? That, I told her, made about as much sense as going to the doctor because of an ankle injury and complaining when he manipulated the ankle and asking why couldn't he cure her by manipulating her knee. She seemed stuck within the *Here Be Dragons* coping model, either Remove The Dragon, or Remove Yourself from the negative situation. To better her options and at least have some hope of relating to her family in the future, she needed to cope better, either with Defang The Dragon, or to Learn To Live With Dragons as more sophisticated coping methods for her situation. Jan finally agreed to verbal desensitization of the negatives about her and her family, which until that point, she couldn't accept and simply avoided.

Jan was first taught the verbal skills of Fogging and Negative Assertion, much in the same manner as our hypothetical Korean War Vet in

the previous chapter. In this dialog, I illustrate first the emotional desensitization of personal negatives generated by a real breakdown of the mother daughter relationship, and then the environmental negatives generated by this dysfunctional family. As in all teaching dialogs, when the learner begins to deny, the denial always precedes a rationalization to justify the denial. When the rationalization is challenged, the learner becomes defensive automatically. As this sequence happens, it is duck soup to meaningfully teach the learner to Fog critique of his or her interpretation of reality, usually resulting in a personal insight on why one needs to be defensive about anything. Consequently, this process extinguishes the need for denial, rationalization, and defensiveness about personal or hurtful environmental negatives and eliminates the emotional reaction to the negatives themselves. As with all the dialogs presented herein, this one is a composite from a number of cases, illustrating a variety of possible responses, and edited for brevity, teaching purposes, and confidentiality.

Verbal Behavior Therapy Dialog 9.

Freeing Oneself As An Adolescent From The Irrational Emotional Bonds Of Parent And Child And Making The Relationship That Of Two Adults.

- Me: To teach you how to deal with your personal and family boo-boos, I'm going to have to act as the heavy. For this to work, I'm going to have to try to make you feel uncomfortable, very uncomfortable. Is that okay?
- Jan: Sure, that won't bother me at all.
- Me: (Beginning) that sounds like a very cocky response to me. Are you just bluffing?
- Jan: No it wasn't a bluff, I really meant it.
- Me: It doesn't sound like you meant it. It sounds artificial.
- Jan: It's not. You just don't know me enough to tell. (Denial - rationalization)
- Me: Sure.
- Jan: It's true!
- Me: If you believe that I know of some prime swampland in New Jersey you might be interested in.
- Jan: Why won't you believe me?
- Me: Why are you so defensive about this?
- Jan: I am not defensive. You don't know what you are talking about.

(Denial - rationalization)

Me: I beg your pardon. When did the state give you your psychologist's license? What school did you study at?

Jan: You're not being fair. You know what I mean.

Me: Look at you. Someone simply questions what you say and you make a federal case out of it.

Jan: I did not. You did! (Denial/rationalization)

Me: You are getting defensive again.

Jan: I am not. (Denial).

Me: Look at yourself. Are you upset inside?

Jan: Yes, but that's just because you're saying things that are untrue. (Rationalization)

Me: Strange, I'm the other half of this conversation and I'm certainly not upset. Why is that?

Jan: Because you are just picking on me. (Rationalization)

Me: Tell me why you are upset.

Jan: You are saying things that aren't true about me.

Me: Sounds like you are defensive. You know what being defensive is? Denying something about yourself in an emotional way. Are you doing that?

Jan: Yes, but I'm not defensive. (Denial/rationalization)

Me: Then what are you doing?

Jan: I'm just protecting myself. (Denial/rationalization)

Me: That sounds like being defensive to me. Listen to yourself. Listen to what you just said.

Jan: I know it sounds like it, but I'm not defensive. (Denial - rationalization)

Me: (Patiently) Listen to yourself.

Jan: Well, maybe just a little. But that's just because you are so mean. (Rationalization)

Me: Listen to yourself. What did you just say?

Jan: (Defensively) Okay. So I'm defensive. What did you expect with what you said about me. (Rationalization)

Me: Why are you being defensive about being defensive?

Jan: What do you mean?

Me: Listen to me. Why are you being defensive now about being defensive before?

Jan: I don't know.

Me: You know that you (most of us) get defensive when we feel bad

about something and someone accuses us of it publicly, don't you?

Jan: Yes.

Me: That means that you felt bad about being defensive before. Because you are being defensive about it now.

Jan: Oh.

Me: Make sense?

Jan: Yes.

Me: Why should you feel bad about being defensive?

Jan: What do you mean?

Me: Did I ever say that getting defensive was bad?

Jan: (Thinking back) No, but...

Me: But what?

Jan: No, but it sounded like you implied it.

Me: *Au contraire, mon ami*, you inferred it. If you review our conversation to now, nowhere will you see any judgment of mine of what you do. All I did was ask questions and make observations. You made the judgment that what you were doing was something to feel bad about when you even inferred that someone was criticizing you.

Jan: Why?

Me: Because you were indoctrinated to automatically do that when you were a child learning to speak and walk and think and do all sorts of wonderful things. We couldn't have just left you alone when the rest of us were already taught to blame ourselves for anything that might be wrong. If we left you alone, you would have conquered the universe by now, taken over IBM, written articles for The National Inquirer, turned down the presidency for a better job, who knows what.

Jan: Humm...

Me: You heard the explanation and demonstration of Fogging before, so you know it. We were supposed to be practicing Fogging so you could eliminate your emotional response to your personal negatives. Why didn't you just Fog everything I said?

Jan: I could have, couldn't I?

Me: You were very defensive before.

Jan: Yes I was, wasn't I? (Fogging)

Me: And you didn't have to be defensive.

Jan: I felt that I had to tell the truth. (Rationalization)

- Me: You are getting defensive again.
- Jan: (Stopping for a moment) Yes that was dumb of me to slip into that old habit of defending myself when there was nothing to defend myself against. (Fogging)
- Me: Incredibly dumb, I'd say.
- Jan: You're right. It was dumb. (Fogging)
- Me: Now that you are no longer defensive, we want to do two things here. First, to desensitize you about your own significant negative qualities. This is to make you able to deal with your family environment without any of your own negatives producing big negative emotions that get in the way. Secondly, we want to desensitize you to any of your family's negatives so they don't get in the way of you being able, as a psychological adult, to handle your family and its problems realistically, instead of getting angry, or anxious and then withdrawing from them. First we will look at your personal negatives and then blend into your family's, especially your mother's negatives, along with your maladaptive coping to them. Okay?
- Jan: Okay.
- Me: Because you chose the route of not talking about yourself or your family, this will be a shotgun approach.
- Jan: It probably will. (Fogging)
- Me: Cute. Let me just run through a quick list of your negatives.
- Jan: Okay.
- Me: I will have to lay a lot of negatives on you, which you may want to protest as not being yours.
- Jan: I probably will. (Fogging)
- Me: Now that's very good because I was talking about you, not what I was going to do. Maybe you're catching on.
- Jan: Thank you.
- Me: No dum-dum. The correct response is "I probably am catching on.
- Jan: You're right. Silly of me. I should have said that. (Fogging)
- Me: You are egotistical. Think you are something you are not.
- Jan: You said it before. I'm probably too cocky. (Fogging)
- Me: The troubles with your mother are partly your fault. You don't try to get advice from someone.
- Jan: That I know is true. I don't like to talk about it, even think about it. (Fogging and Voluntary Self Disclosure)

- Me: You are stubborn. People have trouble working with you for a common goal.
- Jan: I am. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: You procrastinate. You say you will do something and then it never gets done; like I'll talk about my problems later.
- Jan: Well, it almost never gets done. (Fogging)
- Me: You drive people crazy with the way you do things inconsistently.
- Jan: I certainly drive you guys crazy by being inconsistent. I feel bad about that. (Fogging and voluntary Self Disclosure)
- Me: Sort of the type of mixed up emotional response you typically gave to your mother whenever she got on your case.
- Jan: I probably did. (Fogging)
- Me: There was no probably about it. You acted like a dumb kid with no brains.
- Jan: I was a dumb kid. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: That's no excuse.
- Jan: You're right. No excuse for not using my brains. (Fogging)
- Me: You acted like an ass; a juvenile ass.
- Jan: That's probably true. I acted like a real ass. (Fogging)
- Me: And you were stupid to get mad at your mother.
- Jan: I was stupid to get mad at her. (Fogging)
- Me: It didn't do a damn bit of good.
- Jan: You're right. Nothing changed because I got angry. (Fogging)
- Me: She listened to your anger instead of what you wanted her to hear about changing things.
- Jan: You're right. It was a complete waste. (Fogging)
- Me: You acted like a wimp.
- Jan: I did. How long does it take to wise up? (Negative assertion) I let her try to interfere with the birthday party that my friend was throwing for me and my family at her house.
- Me: I recall you said that your mother insisted on knowing how many cookies your friend was providing. You then went to your friend demanding she tell your mother. When your friend said "enough," your mother demanded to know how many and you didn't tell her to back off. Maybe your Mom thought that some of your wimpiness rubbed off on your friend.
- Jan: I hate to accept it but maybe I am a wimp and Mom is a pushy person. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: And you kept loving her, sucking up to her, just dying for any

crumb of affection, while she kept crapping on you.

Jan: God, was I stupid. I guess I was just brainless. (Fogging)

Me: And you would do just about anything to get even a little attention or affection from everybody else.

Jan: Boy that was me. I even pretended to be bulimic. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: You made a profession out of being a victim.

Jan: Did I! That's hard to accept. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: Why is it hard to accept?

Jan: Because it means that I chose to be a real loser instead of myself. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: I suspect you can't handle your anger appropriately.

Jan: I probably don't, (Fogging) but can you be a bit more specific?

Me: Say you were making some popcorn at your friend's apartment. Say some of her friends were there. Say one of them stuck her hand in your bowl of popcorn and took three pieces of popcorn without asking. You then would probably go ballistic all out of proportion to the crime.

Jan: Yes, I know I would do that. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: You would be immature enough not to realize you have been angry over a lot of things, including your family, for a long time, and that silly things can trigger that anger. Displaced anger or aggression it's called.

Jan: You are right on that. I do that a lot but I didn't know why. I'm lucky I don't have an ulcer. (Fogging, Negative Self Assertion)

Me: And you would explode again tomorrow if it happened again, all over three little pieces of popcorn.

Jan: I would hope not, but I probably would. (Fogging)

Me: Now let's talk less about you and more about your mother and family.

Jan: Okay.

Me: From what you have told us before, your mother sounds like a real bitch.

Jan: She probably is. (Fogging)

Me: On the surface she sometimes acts like she recognizes you as her daughter, but deep down where it really counts she probably doesn't give a damn about you.

Jan: You're probably right. (Fogging)

Me: It seems like she really hasn't given a damn about you for a long

time.

Jan: What can I say? That seems to sum it up. It's painful to acknowledge, but that's probably the way it is. (Fogging and Voluntary Self Disclosure)

Me: It seems that not only doesn't she love you as a daughter, she doesn't even like you.

Jan: I guess so. (Fogging)

Me: Your father, even as an alcoholic, had the right idea when he left her.

Jan: It seems like it. (Fogging)

Me: But he also seems to have a lot of problems. He certainly didn't care that much about you. He left you for Mom to screw up.

Jan: And that really pisses me off. Why did he do that? Why didn't he do something to take care of us? (Fogging and Voluntary Self Disclosure)

Me: Maybe he's really a very weak person, just like your Mom.

Jan: My Mom doesn't seem weak.

Me: Then why did she turn everything in the family over to you to do? That doesn't sound too strong and capable.

Jan: I see. Yes, you're probably right. (Fogging)

Me: It sounds like she has some severe personal problems that she is not about to do anything about. If they screwed up her responsibilities, so what? She had you to dump everything on. Jan the maid, nanny, cook, etc. What didn't you do for her? Wipe her bottom?

Jan: That makes sense. (Fogging)

Me: And you were too much of a sucker, a loving daughter, a frightened kid, a brainless idiot, to tell Mom where your limits were. You still haven't done that.

Jan: You're right. I should have took a stand and put my foot down sometime between when I was fifteen and now. (Fogging) But I was afraid that would just destroy our relationship.

Me: What relationship? You split as soon as you could instead of trying to work something out with her — In spite of all the negative traits we just talked about. You didn't deal with these environmental negatives one by one and getting inured to them so they didn't block you from working out things with Mom. You denied they existed, said Mom was wonderful, and then ran away as soon as you could. True?

- Jan: You're a son of a bitch, you know that? You didn't leave me with one little scrap to disguise my stupidity and poor coping.
(Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: Please... No compliments are necessary. Now all you have to do before you can work out some sort of new, adult to adult relationship with your mother is to keep using Fogging and Negative Self Assertion to desensitize yourself to all these crappy little negatives — yours and hers — so they don't stop you, so you can deal with Mom for the rest of her life as she is now. She isn't going to change.
- Jan: Why can't she change?
- Me: She can, anytime she wants. If she wanted to, she would have changed already. The best predictor for the future is the past track record. Predicting gross human behavior is no more difficult than predicting which horse will win the race and which will lose — the one which kept winning before, and the one which kept losing before. But if you know Mom's negatives and are not frightened or upset by them, you can deal with her, on a daily basis if necessary.
- Jan: Couldn't she be a long shot and win the race by changing?
- Me: Sure, but how often does a long shot occur?
- Jan: I guess you're right. I can sit on my butt and hope, or learn how to deal with her, as you say, as a psychological adult.

Now let's give you, the learner, a little test. How well could you handle a similar teaching dialog using the verbal skills of Fogging and Negative Self Assertion? Even though you may not now have a problem with your family or have already resolved it, the practice gained in this test dialog will help you deal with real personal and environmental negatives — if none of these fit — when we later cover possible problems more closely matching your own situation. * In the following test dialog, you just fill in your own Fogging or Negative Self Assertion responses in the blank spaces labeled "You." Suggested possible responses are given after this test. Although the negatives have to do with relationships and

* Footnote

The how-to-do-it, self-help model of the five etiological steps that can be used to describe your own psychological problem can be found in the Appendices at the end of the book (see Appendix A.) After filling out the description of your psychological problem, this information can be used to organize the practice list of environmental and personal negatives you will use to resolve your problem (see Appendix B.)

family, they could be about anything, and the suggested possible responses can easily be modified to fit just about any negative based upon a judgment call of self, or the changed environment

Verbal Behavior Therapy Test Dialog 10.

Practicing to cope effectively with anxiety producing personal and environmental negatives.

Me: (01) You say things you don't mean.

You: ?

Me: (02) You are cruel, saying things just to hurt other people.

You: ?

Me: (03) You are immature and don't know how to relate to other real human beings, especially if they have problems.

You: ?

Me: (04) You are selfish.

You: ?

Me: (05) You are never concerned with others except how it will benefit you.

You: ?

Me: (06) You lie a lot.

You: ?

Me: (07) You are not too smart, relationship wise.

You: ?

Me: (08) You could have avoided this whole breakup with your Mom if you hadn't let your own problems get in the way.

You: ?

Me: (09) You are a real coward, running away from your family.

You: ?

Me: (10) All families have problems. You just needed to work harder at it.

You: ?

Me: (11) You are a kiss ass, sucking up to everything your mother says, even after what she has done to you.

You: ?

Me: (12) You don't want to look at reality.

You: ?

Me: (13) You would rather pretend that your family is not dysfunctional.

- You: ?
- Me: (14) You won't even admit that your mother really doesn't give a fig about you and your welfare.
- You: ?
- Me: (15) Your father told you all to go suck a lemon years ago.
- You: ?
- Me: (16) Since the divorce he rarely communicates or phones you to see how you are.
- You: ?
- Me: (17) Says a lot about how he cares about you.
- You: ?
- Me: (18) I'll bet he has himself set up with a young bimbo girl friend and could give a damn about his former family.
- You: ?
- Me: (19) You would rather pretend that everything is just dandy between you and your family than face negative reality and try to work things out as an adult.
- You: ?
- Me: (20) You are really dumb about your family.
- You: ?

Answers to Verbal Behavior Therapy Test Dialog 10.

Possible Fogging and Negative Self Assertion responses

- Me: (01) You say things you don't mean.
- You: You may be right. (Fogging)
I probably do. (Fogging)
That hits the nail right on the head. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: (02) You are cruel, saying things just to hurt other people. In other words, you act like a real bitch (or son of) for no good reason.
- You: You may be right. (Fogging)
That probably describes me to a T. (Fogging)
I couldn't have said it better myself. (Fogging)
- Me: (03) You are immature and don't know how to relate to other real human beings, especially if they have problems.
- You: You may be right. (Fogging)
What can I say? I'm sure I've seen that myself. (Fogging)

Nine out of ten would agree. (Fogging)

Me: (04) You are selfish.

You: You may be right. (Fogging)

I' bet money I'm that way. (Fogging)

No doubt in my mind. (Fogging)

Me: (05) You are never concerned with others except how it will benefit you.

You: You may be right. (Fogging)

I'm sure I do that a lot. (Fogging)

I'm a lot more selfish than I like. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: (06) You lie a lot.

You: You may be right. (Fogging)

My tongue certainly knows the taste of soap. (Fogging)

Sometimes even I can't keep what's true and false straight in my own mind. (Fogging)

Me: (07) You are not too smart, relationship wise.

You: You may be right. (Fogging)

Thank God boats aren't built from relationships or I'd be sunk. (Fogging)

I'd better stick to a career orientation. (Fogging)

Me: (08) You could have avoided this whole breakup with Mom if you hadn't let your own problems get in the way.

You: You may be right. (Fogging)

Sometimes I think my problems run me. (Fogging)

The problems didn't screw things up, I did. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: (09) You are a real coward, running away from your family.

You: You may be right. (Fogging)

I would not make a very good lion tamer. (Fogging)

But I would make a very good long distance runner. (Fogging)

Me: (10) All families have problems. You just needed to work harder at it.

You: You may be right. (Fogging)

I am probably not as persevering as I should be. (Fogging)

Me working harder is an oxymoron. (Fogging)

Me: (11) You are a kiss ass, sucking up to everything your mother says, even after what she has done to you.

You: You may be right. (Fogging)

Around her I act like I've been hit on the head a bunch of times.

(Fogging)

I am incredibly stupid in the way I relate to her. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: (12) You don't want to look at reality.

You: You may be right. (Fogging)

Reality and me don't really get along. (Fogging)

I probably don't want to look at it. (Fogging)

Me: (13) You would rather pretend that your family is not dysfunctional.

You: You may be right. (Fogging)

I don't want to look at that either. (Negative Self Assertion)

I am the great pretender. (Fogging)

Me: (14) You won't even admit that your mother really doesn't give a fig about you and your welfare.

You: You may be right. (Fogging)

I don't admit much of anything about her. (Fogging)

Or that she really doesn't give a grape, or a prune, or a banana. (Fogging)

Me: (15) Your father told you all to go suck a lemon years ago.

You: You may be right. (Fogging)

He probably did. (Fogging)

And he thought so little of us that he told us to do some other things too. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: (16) Since the divorce he rarely communicates or phones you to see how you are.

You: You may be right. (Fogging)

He acts like he hasn't got a nickel to make the call. (Fogging)

In his eyes we are so worthless he rarely does anything that has to do with us. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: (17) Says a lot about how he cares about you.

You: You may be right. (Fogging)

Probably says he doesn't care much at all. (Fogging)

Sometimes I wonder if he remembers my name. He probably doesn't (Fogging)

Me: (18) I'll bet he has himself set up with a young bimbo girl friend and could give a damn about his former family.

You: You may be right. (Fogging)

I'd bet money on it. (Fogging)

That sure sounds like him. (Fogging)

- Me: (19) You would rather pretend that everything is just dandy between you and your family than face negative reality and try to work things out as an adult.
- You: You may be right. (Fogging)
I would like to pretend things are dandy. (Fogging)
I certainly do avoid trying to work things out. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: (20) You are really dumb about your family.
- You: You may be right. (Fogging)
Sometimes I think I was born brainless. (Fogging)
You don't see many rocket scientists around my house. (Fogging)

As you can see, you can just use a stereotyped "You may be right" response, or something more specific, as the range of responses to each stated negative or possible negative illustrates.

With emotional desensitization through the use of a number of teaching dialogs like those above, Jan was able to successfully cope with her family, particularly her mother by thinking, planning and behaving as a psychological adult in a non-emotional manner. Unfortunately, Jan's mother did not like this change where she could not control her daughter and tried various manipulative ploys to get Jan to back down. One was to start a fight when she visited Jan at her friend's house. Jan was able to cope with this irrational behavior as a psychological adult who was not intimidated by Mom and her negatives. Jan responded on this particular occasion with statements like; "I'm really sorry you feel that way Mom. I had hoped we could talk and communicate on a more productive level." Or, "Gee, Mom. It distresses me to see you like this. Would you like to go home and see me later when you are not so upset?" Or "I don't blame you for being angry at me leaving the family. But I'm not coming back home.", etc. When her mother threatened to dump Jan's dog off at the pound, she simply responded; "Okay. I've made arrangements for her. If you do that, give me a call so I can go and pick her up."

At this point you may be asking "What's the point of this whole teaching episode? Is it to just be assertive to Mom?" The answer to that question is, of course, no. The purpose of learning to be a psychological adult with your parents is threefold. First it is to make you able to engage in a relationship with your parents — in spite of their negatives — if any relationship is possible. Second, it is to make your decision to

withdraw from your parents a voluntary one, not an involuntary flight from any possible obnoxious qualities they might have. Third, it is to make you feel better about yourself because you have really tried, as a psychological adult, to make things work, especially by accepting — and thereby desensitizing — your own personal negatives that may have contributed to the problem before.

A case of son - mother one way emotional bonding and the conditions which allowed it to happen

For the past few years I have been working — on and off — with a case of childhood conditioning and indoctrination of a male child, Chuck, by his mother that, until the age of twelve, closely replicated the conditions of the Korean War POW camps (see Chapter Two). Chuck is now a very bright business manager. He is in charge of three sections of engineering at different plants for a large corporation. Chuck first saw me when he was forty. During most of those seven years which I have seen him, he would call me up because he had a particular problem and could I counsel/coach him on how to handle it. He would listen, practice, then go off and deal with whatever problem he was working on and I would not see him again for months, or years. But he always came back with a new problem dealing with people. This last year, however, the focus of Chuck's problems changed. He revealed something he never told me before. He said he has had a voice in his head since childhood which always told him to watch out for potholes in the road, with girl friends, cleaning up his office properly, even with me, no matter what he was actually engaged in doing. The voice was always negative predicting failure unless it was heeded. Chuck complained that the voice was wearing him out since it intruded upon his life hundreds of times a day in every area except engineering. Right away that should have told me something.

Chuck was odd since the only people who hear voices talking to them are psychotics and Chuck was not psychotic. Crazy people attribute their voices to God, the Devil, pornographic radio stations, etc. which tell them to do things which society would not approve. Chuck's voice, on the other hand, had no attribution — it was just part of him — and always was negative and told him that he would screw something up unless he did things the way the voice told him to.

Chuck was quite relieved when I told him that he was not psychotic,

and his voice was probably just a learned habit. But, of/from what, I didn't know. We made little progress in either understanding Chuck's voice or knowing why he had it until I used the Korean War POW camps brainwashing/indoctrination example to make a point about something else. When I was done explaining what the underlying requirements of brainwashing were, Chuck told me with great excitement that I had just described his childhood. When he was about four, his mother began to keep him around her all the time, telling him not to screw up. If he did things on his own without asking her what was correct and how to do it, he was told he would be a failure. His whole environment was his mother. His father was a busy businessman who didn't have time for kids, except for, "How are you doing?", and "Be sure to obey your mother." He was not allowed to play with other kids until he was twelve. He went to school, but with his older and younger sister. If he struck up conversations or friendships with other boys, his sisters would — as instructed — report that to his mother that afternoon when they came home. He then was subjected to indoctrination that he was a Jew and Jews were all alone and could not trust anyone. If you made friends with non-Jews (there were no other Jewish kids in his school) they would always disappoint and turn on you because you were a Jew. Basically, Chuck had just described the procedures for controlling beliefs and behavior as practiced in Korean War POW camps and in cults. The American POWs had to endure this procedure for less than four years and what a mess that produced in their lives. Chuck was subjected to it for twice that time with at least two years of it occurring during his latency period, while the major part of his cortex was still forming.

The voice that Chuck heard was, of course, that of his mother, integrated within his psyche, or in other words, the early pre-programming of his mid-brain. Without being aware that the voice represented his mother, Chuck avoided her completely, settling in Southern California as soon as his schooling ended. He often phoned his father to keep in touch, but tried, as much as possible, to avoid speaking to his mother unless it was absolutely necessary. Clearly Chuck had a psychological problem associated with his family in addition to his unwanted internal critic. Chuck had responded to this dilemma with his mother using *Here Be Dragons* coping; with either Remove The Dragon, or Remove Yourself.

How could we rid Chuck of this excess and unnecessary emotional baggage? We had tried Fogging and Negative Self Assertion a number of times to deal with negatives in Chuck's perception of himself, but with

mixed results. Some of it worked and some didn't. The key for Chuck to deal with this unnecessary reminder of a bleak childhood was to keep in mind what he was told by Mom during that childhood, i.e., "There are many very nasty forces out there that will hurt you if you do not have my protection." Chuck reported that this childhood conditioning was still in effect. In talking to other engineers, he felt that he had to really suck up to them or they would hurt him professionally. One could argue about that fear, but Chuck had some even more basic ones. I used to see him at night in my house in Mandeville canyon, sitting at the breakfast room table. He said that whenever he heard a noise out in the yard — it could be a deer, a dog, a coyote, etc.— he became afraid it might be something — he didn't know what — that could hurt him or make him feel helpless.

With that type of unspecific fear as the basis of his reaction to his mother's negative voice within him, I suggested that we make this a high tech desensitization. Hollywood turns out dozens of potboiler horror movies where the primary frightening stimulus is an unknown threat that repeatedly places you in a situation where you cannot predict what will happen. All that was necessary was for Chuck to obtain a goodly number of horror videos and watch them with a particular set of instructions.

One of the Orienting Reflex method (see Chapter Four) ways to reduce anxiety involuntarily is following a set of instructions that requires thinking, like counting backwards from one hundred by threes (100, 97, 94, 91, etc.), or any other instructed task involving thinking. Chuck was to follow a specific set of instructions in watching each of the videos; first one, then another, then a third, and so on, until none of them bothered him. He was to first watch the video all the way through measuring his SUDs level each five minutes, and writing it down in a log. Then he was to repeat his watching of the video with the following instructions:

- 1) He was to watch it in five minute segments, watching each segment repeatedly until it produced a zero SUDs level.* If a zero level did not occur through boredom within five repeats, he was to go to instruction # 2.
- 2) He was to assume the role of, in order; the writer, the director, and the cameraman, in order to assess how that segment could be made more believable (always easy with Hollywood products), and how to crank up the scariness of that segment. Chuck was also instructed that if his SUDs still remained high doing this, he should "bandspread" the fearful part so

* Footnote

he would not get so much of it at once. He could only watch one minute of it. Or thirty seconds of it. Or only five seconds of it at a time if it were too scary. If nothing seemed to work, he was to watch the video while writing his comments on an engineering report from his subordinates at work. That work based counter-conditioning stimulus would wipe out any emotions Frankenstein could induce

It took eighteen hours of video exposure for Chuck to decondition his infantile emotional reaction to this video surrogate for life's unknowns of which his mother had conditioned him to be frightened. It would have taken less time, but like many bright people, Chuck had trouble following instructions. Until told to stop, he would immediately review the whole film again after he had conquered one part. He thereby wiped out the positive conditioning he had just undergone. This was like learning to swim in the pool's shallow end, then prematurely going into the deep end to see how frightening it would be, and becoming overwhelmed — thereby reconditioning all the anxiety already deconditioned. It is easy to see why this type of frustrating behavior was seen by old time clinicians as a desire not to be cured. I personally prefer the less complicated label of simple stupidity in conjunction with intellectual arrogance.

Once we had reduced his fear of the unknown, conditioned within him in childhood, Chuck using the following teaching dialog to eliminate the critical surrogate voice of his mother, which had plagued him for forty years. Within this dialog are some of the critiques made to Chuck by his surrogate mother voice over the period of three weeks. After this treatment method was used, the voice extinguished. In this dialog used to practice responding to the surrogate mother voice, I played the surrogate mother voice in the same way Chuck reported it to me. The whole point of this procedure is to eliminate plus reinforcement of any sort to the surrogate mother voice. Fogging accomplishes that for any negative accusation or criticism from external sources such as manipulators, or for one's own internal self-criticism, such as Chuck's surrogate mother voice provided. Basically it desensitized Chuck to his mother's negatives in the same way we worked with Jan's mother's negatives previously.

Verbal Behavior Therapy Dialog 11.

Becoming a psychological adult to your mother when you are a forty seven year old male.

Voice: (During driving) Watch it. There's a pot hole close to you in the next lane.

- Chuck: I'm sure you're worried Mom, but no sweat. (Fogging) I can handle pot holes.
- Voice: You're just not a good driver at night. You work too much and tend to get drowsy.
- Chuck: I know that's a concern of yours Mom. (Fogging) I can drive home okay.
- Voice: You will make a mistake and injure yourself.
- Chuck: (Same monotone response) I hear your concern Mom. (Fogging) I'm a manager of engineers. If I hurt myself I'll get someone to fix it.
- Voice: You might kill yourself.
- Chuck: There's no doubt that you're afraid of that Mom. (Fogging) But I have no problem with my driving.
- Voice: You'll run over something in the road and damage the car.
- Chuck: I'm sure you're afraid of that Mom. (Fogging) I can dodge any thing in the road.
- Voice: (At work) You had better get those files up to date or you will have big trouble.
- Chuck: I'm sure you are worried about my files Mom. I'll handle them.
- Voice: You will be sorry that you ignore what I have to tell you.
- Chuck: I'm sure you feel that I ignore what you have to say Mom. (Fogging) Don't worry about it. If I think what you say has merit, I will pay attention.
- Voice: Watch out for that competing inventor. He will sue you for patent infringement.
- Chuck: I'm sure you feel concern for me getting sued Mom. (Fogging) I'll certainly pay attention to any one I think will sue me.
- Voice: You will never be a success unless you pay attention to what I say.
- Chuck: I'm sure you feel that way Mom. (Fogging) If you say something that interests me, I'll listen to it.

The material in this dialog may seem repetitive and quite juvenile to you. That perception is quite correct. It is meant to be as repetitive as possible and as juvenile as we could make it since it was to deal with an infantile conditioned emotional response that was learned sometime between age four and six. We could go on ad infinitum with example after example of how Chuck's surrogate mother voice criticized him and how he could respond to it without reinforcing it. Within three weeks of responding to the voice this way, at all times of the day or night, the voice

finally extinguished and has not regenerated itself as of this printing.

Shortly after this success, Chuck decided to go back home because his father was very ill. There he found that the family doctor had basically retired. In consultation he found the old doctor was not up to date on proper cardiac treatment and was likely shortening his father's life by six months to a year. Chuck fired the family doctor and brought in the specialist who consulted with him and who could lengthen his father's life. His mother tried to fight his decision and to take control by saying that she knew what was best for her husband and Chuck had better pay attention to her. Chuck simply replied; "Mom, I make these kinds of decisions everyday in talking to consultants. You don't know what you are talking about. Dr. Jones is out and Dr. Bern is in." When Chuck took charge, Mom backed down and accepted Dr. Bern. Chuck reported that incident with Mom was an enormous revelation about himself and her, replicating in real, nitty gritty, down and dirty life experience, what had been done in practice at my kitchen table. Since then, Chuck has visited his mother six times, and each time was able to use his thinking brain instead of his emotional mid brain to respond successfully as a psychological adult to his mother's interactions with him; wherein he was expected to respond with his mid-brain as if he were still a child. Basically, he had expanded his coping options to more than Removing The Dragon or Removing Yourself into Defang The Dragon and Learning To Live With Dragons and he did it very effectively.

Freeing oneself as a mature woman of between thirty and fifty from the irrational emotional bonds of parent and child and making the bonding that of two adults

In my clinical experience, conflict between mothers and daughters peaks between thirty and fifty, simply because there is so much happening in daughter's life in those twenty years. There are husbands to disapprove of, kids not reared and/or disciplined properly, meals not prepared, and homes not kept up the way in which Mom instructed. Let me give you an example of mother daughter conflict due to one way, over bonding resulting from a restricted childhood environment. This example is not a worse case type, as was that of Jan earlier. The issues illustrating the mother daughter conflict spanned those twenty plus years between thirty and fifty. In my experience in counseling women on this problem, I see this case as more typical than not. I suspect that many women have

this psychological problem and fail to resolve it because of an unrealistic "fairy tale" belief held by the majority of daughters on how they would like their mothers to be and behave towards them.

Anne is a transplanted Texan. She was a child of six living in Dallas when her father left home during WWII in the Army Air Corps. Her mother, unfortunately, was her entire environment during the war, except for school. Mom had few friends and did not allow Anne to play with other children in their neighborhood. Anne was very shy and didn't mix with other kids even when Mom couldn't prevent it, like, for example, in church and school social events. When her father came home from the war, little changed because he talked her mother into going to South Africa, (where he had served) with him to improve their economic future. Dad was happy as a sales rep while Anne's mother hated South Africa and South Africans. She declined to socialize with any of Dad's new friends and even refused to attend any of Anne's school events. Anne's mother kept indoctrinating her on how horrible South Africa and the South Africans were to the point of creating schisms between the few friends that Anne had made at school. Anne, through her mother's efforts to let Dad know she was very displeased with being in Africa, was subjected to a quite restricted social and intellectual environment.

The end result of this environmental restriction was, as we have seen before, intense one way emotional bonding (Anne's environment was restricted, not Mom's) that was inappropriate as soon as Anne began to mature and see the disparity between her mother's biases — passed off as truth — and what reality was. Anne graduated from high school at sixteen, worked for two years to earn money, and then left her family at eighteen. She traveled half way around the world on her own at that young age to withdraw from her mother's negative influence. She went to Dallas and later to California to live.

Anne, like most of us when a problem arises, chose to not resolve things between her and her mother — things which would come back to emotionally haunt her in later years — but to run away from her. She dealt with her mother by the *Here Be Dragons* coping method; Remove the Dragon or Remove Yourself. However, living eight thousand miles from Mom did not lessen Mom's influence on Anne. Anne took her over-dependent emotional bonding along with her. For example, Anne was expected to write twice a week to Mom to let her know what was happening. She did this for thirty-three years, until her mother was committed to a retirement home with Alzheimer's disease. Each letter was

expected to be bright and cheery to liven up Mom's day, otherwise a somewhat nasty and depressive account of what was happening to Mom would be sent in the next post, with the implication that somehow, Mom's situation was, at least, Anne's responsibility if not her fault! This feeling of guilt and responsibility for her mother's feeling good was so indoctrinated that Anne even questioned herself seriously whether or not she should continue to write — even though, as an early Alzheimer's patient, Mom had trouble understanding what was in the letter.

I saw Anne soon after the absurdity of her feelings, like guilt for not writing to an Alzheimer's patient, became apparent to her. Anne felt that she could not deal with Mom even as an Alzheimer's patient. She wanted to be able to visit her Mom in her last few years feeling like an adult, not an incompetent, emotional kid, no matter how selfish and unmotherly her mother had behaved towards her in the past. Anne detailed for me a great list of Mom's questionable behavior — the environmental negatives from childhood in Dallas and so on. Basically she wanted to learn to Defang The Dragon and Learn How To Live With Dragons. So, we used a teaching dialog similar to the following.

This dialog covers selected negatives experienced in close to fifty years of dealing with Mom, and always paying a price for doing so. So, it applied to Anne at whatever age she decided to do something about her psychological problem, thirty, thirty-six, forty-two, or fifty. It applies to you also, no matter what your age when you decide to change the relationship between you and your parent from that of mother and child, to two adults who can be close, no matter what faults and negatives each of them have. If you doubt that your mother has the ability to do this, look at how slick and gracious she is with other people, even ones she has only just met, as compared to how she behaves towards you. She has that ability or she would not survive. She only needs to learn that you are a psychological adult, just like the rest of the people she deals with. You teach her by being a psychological adult in her presence, not a guilty little kid, and you Learn To Live With Dragons by first learning how to Defang The Dragon.

Prior to this dialog, of course, Anne has been taught the use of Fogging and Negative Self Assertion. In the dialog, I role play Anne's mother, using statements, criticisms, etc. which she had actually made to Anne in the past, as well as me critiquing any personal negatives of Anne's which Mom may have missed.

Verbal Behavior Therapy Dialog 12.

Selected negatives experienced in close to fifty years of dealing with Mom, and always paying a price for doing so.

Me: It seems to me that you really screwed things up. You wasted a lot of your life running away instead of working on resolving your problem with your mother.

Anne: But I didn't know what to do! (Rationalization)

Me: Sure. What a silly excuse. It wasn't my fault. Nobody came up to me and said, "Here's how to solve your problem." Life isn't like that.

Anne: But I didn't know how to do it! (Rationalization)

Me: If you don't know how to do something you ask for directions. Even self-help books have been around for the past twenty-five years.

Anne: I didn't know that. (Denial/rationalization)

Me: You're here to learn how to get rid of chronic negative emotions by learning to Fog them. Or am I mistaken?

Anne: No, you're right.

Me: So do you want to waste more of your life or do you want to learn to get rid of the negatives by Fogging?

Anne: I should want to learn how to Fog negatives, shouldn't I?

Me: Very clever.

Anne: Thank you.

Me: They fall for it every time. No. "Not thank you." You're supposed to say, "You're probably right. I probably am very clever. It doesn't matter if I praise you or critique you. You can't be a psychological adult if you let me be the judge of your actions.

Anne: You're right. (Fogging)

Me: That's been your problem with your mother. You let her be your judge, keeping you a psychological child.

Anne: Dumb of me, right? (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: No. You are not dumb. But you have zero psychological sophistication, just like a kid or most teenagers.

Anne: So I guess I acted like an unsophisticated kid or teenybopper. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: You also used the same tactics on your mother that she used on you; like being bitchy just to be bitchy.

Anne: Yes, I did that. (Negative Self Assertion) I'm not very proud of

it. (Voluntary Self Disclosure)

Me: As a matter of fact, you have adopted most of your bad habits from your mother. That's really kooky. You can't stand some one's bad habits enough so you run away from her, yet you copy her and do the same things in your life.

Anne: That makes me sick. I must look like I'm ready for the rubber room. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: No, just not very psychologically sophisticated or adult like. More like a kid who doesn't know her ear from her elbow and therefore not worthy of much respect.

Anne: I certainly don't respect myself for that; being bitchy, putting someone down, trying to take away someone's dignity, making someone else feel rotten, making them feel responsible for my problems, starting fights over nothing just because I feel lousy, just picking on someone to make them feel bad, winning at all costs, no matter what that does to the other person. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: You certainly seem to have a handle on your own negatives.

Anne: I know what they are, but sometimes I just get so frustrated or angry, I don't care what happens. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: An adult does care. Only a kid doesn't.

Anne: I think I'm still a kid then. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: Even so, why don't we take a look at the environmental negatives which caused you to avoid your mother for so long, your Mom's faults. If you can desensitize yourself to them, then there is no reason you can't interact with her as an adult. Let me role-play Mom for you.

Anne: Okay.

Mom: I always said you were going to lock me up in an old folks home.

Anne: (emotionally) What can I say?

Me: You can say a number of things that are both correct and relevant. How about, "Yes Mom, you always did say that." (Fogging) Or, "I'm sure you felt that way about me. (Fogging) I wasn't the perfect daughter by a long shot." (Negative Self Assertion) I understand how you feel. If I were in your shoes, I would feel that way too." (Voluntary Self Disclosure)

Anne: Okay

Me: Make a response.

Anne: You always did say that about me Mom. (Fogging)

Mom: You were always a wicked little child.

Anne: I'm sure that was true Mom. (Fogging)

Mom: You gave me nothing but trouble. Never obeyed me.

Anne: I'm sure I did give you trouble and disobey you. (Negative Self Assertion)

Mom: I regretted even having you. You were so bad.

Anne: I'm sure I was. (Negative Self Assertion)

Mom: You didn't help one bit when your father died. You might as well have not come home. You were just another burden to me.

Anne: I know I wasn't much help. I didn't act like an adult woman. (Negative Self Assertion)

Mom: Picking fights with me at a time like that. Your temper. You should have had your ears boxed more when you were a child.

Anne: That was unconscionable of me Mom. (Negative Self Assertion)
Maybe if you boxed my ears more I would have turned out a better person. (Fogging)

Mom: You could have married a more sociable man. He never speaks to me.

Anne: You're right Mom. Charlie could be more sociable. (Fogging)

Mom: I never could stand how you liked those young South Africans.

Anne: I'm sure you felt that way. (Fogging)

Mom: You would never take advice. You had to do things your way.

Anne: You're right Mom. I'm sure I was too stubborn. (Fogging)

Mom: You're been a disappointment to me all your life.

Anne: That certainly is true. (Fogging)

Mom: When I went back to live in Dallas after your father died, you never came to visit me. Only once.

Anne: You're right, Mom. That was a mistake. I should have visited you more often. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: Your mom certainly could carry on and on, couldn't she?

Anne: That's the truth. (Fogging)

Me: It sounds like living with her was a bummer.

Anne: It was for me. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: Why did your father put up with her?

Anne: I don't know. When I went back to Dallas last year, one of her oldest friends told me she always worried she had made a mistake in introducing my parents. (Negative Assertion)

Me: She was a bitch?

Anne: Absolutely, a twenty-four carat one. (Negative Assertion)

Me: She drove you crazy over petty things?

Anne: That was her specialty. If something went wrong that she was involved in, like making dinner, or sewing or cleaning, she started cursing, complaining about it to anyone who was near her — as if that person were responsible for what went wrong. (Negative Assertion)

Me: She didn't support you emotionally when you were a kid?

Anne: That's what hurts the most of all. She was so damned egocentric and selfish. She didn't care if she wasn't the center of attention. (Negative Assertion)

Me: Sounds like she had a lot of problems that she took out on you and your father.

Anne: She needed a shrink. (Negative Assertion)

Me: It seems to me that if you had used your own brains, you could have coped very well with your mother and her foibles.

Anne: (Sarcastically) Sure, Superwoman, that's me.

Me: I think you were afraid to try then, and you are still afraid to try today.

Anne: Prove it.

Me: We're doing just that today. You are being successfully desensitized to your mother's faults as well as accepting your own personal negatives; the two things that block someone from resolving a psychological problem and cause one to run.

Anne: How could I have done it without help?

Me: You could have gotten help, or you could have used your brain to figure out how to cope with all your mother's crap instead of acting like a kid. Adults do it all the time.

Anne: I guess I blew it. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: You certainly did Ollie.

Anne: What do I do now?

Me: Practice, practice, practice, and then off to see your mother as an adult instead of an emotionally driven kid.

Anne: Okay.

Having desensitized herself to her own as well as her mother's personal negatives, Anne was able to successfully make several trips to Dallas where her mother was being treated in a retirement home. Anne reported she was not upset by anything her mother did or said to her. Her only regret was that she had not worked through these negatives years before so she could interact with her mother on an adult-to-adult basis as

a younger woman. The moral of her story? It is never too late to Learn To Live With Dragons as a psychological adult.

Now let's turn to the next chapter wherein we look at the resolution of psychological problems in college as an over-indoctrinated student, and at work as a new employee or a new supervisor.

Chapter Six

Violently Kill The Dragon, Remove Yourself Or Learn To Live With Dragons As A Psychological Adult At School And Work

*During their four years with us, we try to teach them character,
but the only thing we are sure they will learn about is beer and sex.*

Clark Kerr, President Emeritus
University of California

If you're not a communist at eighteen, you have no heart.

If you're still one at forty, you have no brain.

George Bernard Shaw

A few years ago UCLA invited me to take part in its Freshman Orientation Program for their really bright incoming students. The reason for this effort on behalf of the frosh was the sobering national statistic of between fifty to sixty percent of each incoming freshman class flunking or dropping out before graduation. This shocking stat applied even to the bright students. A lot of this dropout takes place during the freshman year, so our best organization minds figured some prepping might help, even briefly during orientation week by a hard nosed clinical type like myself who could teach them how to say "no" effectively to the continual beer busts, poker marathons, fraternity/sorority - Arrowhead/Big Bear Mountain sexual exchanges, dorm parties, etc., which would interfere with their studies.

The first thing I had to point out to them was that they were going to be surprised by what they would encounter in college during their first year. The one piece of feedback I have consistently gotten from teens I have prepped and then sent off to their freshman year was "Didn't matter how much you told us in advance how it would be, that first freshman semester shocked the hell out of me."

I pointed this out to those very bright freshmen in a way guaranteed to catch their attention. To start, I adopted a totally humble posture, saying how honored I felt to be selected to speak to the cream of the crop, to the leaders and thinkers of tomorrow, and I wanted to thank UCLA for inviting me to the program. I waited a few moments to let that sink in and

then changed character radically. I said, "Be honest. Let's see a show of hands. How many of you really bought that piece of crap I just handed you." Each time I do this to novice college students, I suck in about half the audience. Then I tell them that to the contrary, that unless they really hustle, like most freshmen, they are really in trouble statistically and their brightness will help them very little with this adaptation problem. The reason, I told them, is because, contrary to the notion that they are a bunch of clear thinkers who supposedly are right on top of things, they have had so many inflexible beliefs and rigid ideas crammed between their ears over the past seventeen years or so by family, friends, teachers, etc., that they resemble people who have been indoctrinated — socially, politically, intellectually. Consequently, UCLA's professors would be hard pressed to teach them how to collect and process new information and then make decisions based upon unbiased critical thinking rather than indoctrinated partisan beliefs. Furthermore, they would need to be desensitized and made comfortable to new ideas that challenge the old ones cemented in place long ago; new ideas such as the concept that you can have two conflicting ideas, beliefs, notions, and both are useful to you. You do not necessarily have to reject one to maintain the intellectual integrity of the other. In short, all your ideas do not have to agree, match, or fit with each other. I pointed out the most famous example of conflicting ideas in physics; the photoelectric effect, theorized by Albert Einstein in 1905, (for which he was awarded the Nobel Prize) where for some purposes light hitting the earth comes from the sun in waves like ocean water hitting the shore, and for other purposes that same light is a particle, like the grains of sand in a sand blaster hitting a piece of metal. Both ideas clash and are incompatible with each other, yet each works in different situations. This was the conflicting stuff they would be intellectually fed and have to get used to digesting over the next few years.

So I taught the incoming freshmen (and women) how to say "no" when their personal goals and desires conflict with school realities. What personal and academic environmental negatives to look out for, yet not be afraid of new ideas conflicting with their old ones since both might be useful in different circumstances, rather than resorting to absolutism. Education, if it does anything besides give a social class stamp of approval, teaches one how to comfortably deal and work with things, ideas, observations, theories, etc. that are incomplete, complex, conflicting, and not always positive; in short an imperfect world. Basically, I taught them how to be personally and intellectually flexible; to see things in terms of

probabilities, not rigid dogma. I taught them — as you will see in the first verbal therapy dialog in this chapter — about difficult new ideas, uncaring professors, manipulative friends, as well as personal negatives including naiveté, inexperience, lack of wisdom, poor choices, and especially lack of responsibility for ones self, and actions. In short, how to Learn To Live With Dragons as a more mature, psychological adult, accustomed to negatives and having to figure out ingenious and original ways to get things done in the chaotic environment with which college education presents them.

Psychological Problem Type II:

Irrational emotional self-assessment as a result of unpredicted change in social, sexual or performance standards at school, job or other situations where early experience does not predict what is needed to be successful in, or generalize to, a later situation.

Although in this chapter I use school and job performance examples to describe this type of psychological problem, it is also the one with which I opened this book. Just look at my fifteen year old irrational emotional self assessment in dealing with the sociosexual behavior — or lack of it — of teenage girls, or the irrational emotional self assessment made by Freud's patient, Anna "O" in not being able to generalize from her asexual middle class environment into one where her roué of a father accidentally stimulated her sexually, or the psychological plight of the Appalachian coal miners after a near death experience trapped in a mine. As you can also see from the Appalachian miner example, this type of psychological problem would also cover learned fears and phobias.

In terms of what conditions set up the problem, there is little or no difference between having trouble at school or on the job and the problem of myself at fifteen or Anna "O" with her drunken father. As we shall see by breaking down a school problem, they are basically identical. The only difference is that one is about sex and the other about studying and school behavior. Both could also fit under a description of lack of maturity or not being a psychological adult.

Can a psychological problem of a student cause violence?

One of the most shocking psychological problems we see splashed in bloody headlines across the front pages of newspapers today concerns students who can't handle the negatives they encounter in school. In

Chapter One, I describe psychological problems as “benign or deadly.” A deadly example of the results of a psychological problem is the shooting of other students by supposedly “loopy loners” who are “psychos” on both college and high school campuses. Despite the yellow journalism describing these troubled students, what they show are the classical signs of a person with a psychological problem; anxiety over uncovered personal and environmental negatives, anger and resentment over feelings of being “had” and being made a fool of, and being at a loss in knowing what to do about these feelings or how to cope with the social negatives they experienced daily with their peers at school

They were confused, anxious over being rejected, irritated and resentful that things were not straightforward. Without being able to put a finger on how, they felt a number had been run on them, they had been conned. They were resentful since, in their eyes they were operating on good faith, but intuitively knew the majority of their peers were not. This is the classical syndrome of complaints with which the great majority of therapy clients begin describing a psychological problem; confusion, anxiety, anger or irritation and resentment without being able to accurately specify how they were in that situation.

The primitive coping used by naïve students can be seen, if you know what to look for, as some form of restriction/withdrawal from the negative school environment. In the case of those whose anger and sense of resentment is coupled with the primitive animalistic coping of withdrawal, they decide their only real option is to restrict their environment by eliminating the negatives in it, i.e., the other students who put them down, criticize, ridicule, etc. This resolution of their problem with other students is exacerbated and taken to the extreme of shooting someone because of their lack of maturity and practical experiences in life of solving such problems in a somewhat civilized manner. If you think back to your own experiences in high school you will recall often feeling like doing violence to someone else. Why? Because high school students seen as a group, are at a stage of life where they are basically not very nice people, being primarily self centered, and concerned with dealing with their own psychological insecurities and anxieties. In brief, the majority of young people — almost all high school and lots of college students — know little beyond *Here Be Dragons* coping options, and in extreme cases, they do literally try to Remove The Dragon by killing it with tragic consequences for others and themselves, as we have seen in the examples of Columbine, Santee, and the University of Texas student shootings..

The proposed solutions which others give us for this tragic dilemma are usually post hoc and lame excuses for not knowing what would work. They range from confiscating and banning all the guns in the nation to subjecting every nerdy looking student to a third degree interrogation, expulsion, and mandatory psychotherapy for bringing a nail file to school. What has not been proposed, up till now, is that a systematic preventative desensitization program similar to that used in teaching kids to effectively deal with the negatives that are guaranteed to be thrown at them by their peers in learning to assert themselves at school.

This type of training program is already given to all students at the Irvine Unified School District in Southern California. This program systematically teaches students how to cope well with personal negatives from their fellow students. Will it prevent 100 percent of possible violent incidents at school? Not likely, unfortunately. But, would such a program increase the probability of preventing such incidents? Very likely, because it is specifically designed to deal with the type of psychological problem that students already have to deal with in their everyday lives.

So with that sobering appraisal of how serious problems can get for students, let's first look at a training dialog for a college freshman who is about to withdraw from academia because of lack of knowledge of how to cope with all of college's negatives, contradictions, and lack of sure answer to important questions. The intent of that dialog is, of course, to begin the freshman on the path to becoming a mature, sophisticated psychological adult, who can, as a matter of fact, routinely deal with such negatives and lack of sure answers. Then, we can look at how Freud would have treated Anna "O" with these new techniques if they had been widely disseminated during his era. After that, difficulties on the job.

Coping with inexperience, naiveté and immaturity as well as school negatives as a freshman at college

Lee was an eighteen year old freshman at San Diego State College, my old alma mater, where I took my bachelor and master degrees. During the semester break, she came to me complaining that she wanted to leave SDSC and go to another school that didn't make her as uncomfortable. This is an unusual request for a frosh unless there is an emotional problem sloshing around inside somewhere. Something was prompting her to withdraw from her academic payoff environment and she did not verbalize it well, but displayed a great deal of negative emotion about it. An analysis of her situation in terms of the etiology of a psychological

problem could clarify why and what she was doing (or not doing.) The following is that analysis in terms of the five steps of a psychological problem: Environmental change, malfunctioning belief(s), environmental negatives, personal negatives, and denial/withdrawal. If her situation fitted the model of a psychological problem, then she and I would know what to do to resolve her difficulty.

1. Environmental change.

The first step in a psychological problem is, of course, a significant change in the environment. For Lee, the change was going to college where all her old mid-brain beliefs relating to academia, those which told her how to feel and behave automatically without having to think things out, were obsolete, irrelevant, and outdated.

2. Malfunctioning beliefs.

The major belief, which Lee operated under, was that college and people in it were the same as high school, and that life in the dorms was like living with sisters and brothers at home. There is a reason for all the freshman orientation programs and dorm workshops on how to cope with people. They give the impression that at least some of the people at college — the administrators — were on their side. Hard reality was — and still is — that no one at college whom a student has to deal with, day by day, really gave a damn whether or not a student succeeded — or even if Lee was there. The great majority of professors really don't care much about undergraduate students, especially about freshmen. They do, however, value graduate students who work for them at less than princely wages. They only teach and do research and don't have the time to be involved. Their attitude ranges from neutral to absolute detachment and disdain; i.e., from, "If you have problems, go to student counseling. I'm not a shrink." to "I assume you want to be here. If college is too much for you, there's the door. Don't let the doorknob hit you in the ass on the way out."

3. Environmental negatives.

With respect to environmental negatives revealed by the environmental change, the typical faculty responses above are a formidable set to which students need to adapt. But there are many other things, which the typical student can't, or has great difficulty handling to keep a balance between studying and having fun in college. There are the freedoms which colleges allow their students. In loco parentis died decades ago.

Thirty years ago colleges had rules like "When a guest visits your room, one foot shall be in contact with the floor at all times." Today there are no such rules. Colleges are rife with sexual temptation and intimacies that are casually broken, which conflict with attention to academics. There are even clubs on the subject of sexual preference lifestyles to enable the student to meet other birds of the same feather. Fraternities and sororities, as well as other groups compete with each other to turn the college experience into party time. Because all of the above detract from serious study, freshmen have to learn how to handle and balance things in adult ways very quickly or they will flunk out or quit.

4. Personal negatives.

Personal negatives revealed by the environmental change of going to college from high school are many for the typical student. Many smart students who breeze through high school find they have a very hard time in their freshman year since they never had to develop good, productive study habits and time management in studying the pap they were learning in high school. Students who were never "popular" in high school find they are accepted at face value for who they are almost anywhere in college social circles. The college population is more truncated than the high school crowd. This means that it is a smaller slice of the general population and more homogeneous and uniform. High school nerds and social misfits easily find their educational and social clones already at college. College students also find assurance in numbers so most everyone is welcome. Hence, high school social rejects have trouble getting balance in saying no to that which they would die for in high school. Because of the above and more, half the entering students find that college is not for them. Because of lack of experience on what is important in college, in life, as well as what works, they lack good judgment; they have not yet attained psychological adulthood.

5. Denial/withdrawal.

Consequently, if freshmen develop a psychological problem in trying to cope with all the environmental and personal negatives which college dumps on them, they typically first deny that something is basically wrong. That works only till the next quiz or midterm exam, when the next psychologically unsophisticated step is to withdraw from anything connected with negative academic performance and personal negatives by not studying, cutting class, and then dropping out. Or they might, as Lee was trying to do, transfer to another school that was more like her

high school, where they "cared" about students, so she could leave her psychological problem with college at San Diego State. She was following the *Here Be Dragons* coping model of Remove The Dragon or Remove Yourself. Now let's examine in detail the following dialog compiled from the experiences of a number of students I have counseled. As in all dialogs, it has been edited for confidentiality, interest, brevity and teaching purposes.*

Verbal Behavior Therapy Dialog 13.

Becoming A Psychological Adult As A Freshman In College By Accepting And Coping With All The Negatives College Piles On You.

Me: Let me toss a bunch of negatives about college and yourself at you and see how you handle them. The whole point of this exercise is to get you to give a relaxed, comfortable, zero emotional or negative feeling response to any college or personal bummer. If you can achieve that, you get rid of any psychological block, which keeps you from being successful in college. Then you can get really down and dirty in studying and doing what you need to do, in spite of all the negatives in college. Hopefully you will learn from this to be your own judge about yourself. If this happens then what you think about college and achievement is the only important consideration. Then you only have a real lifepractical problem of working your butt off to learn and get good grades. Okay?

Lee: Okay.

Me: What I want you to do is to comfortably Fog anything I say, or if we are dealing with personal negatives you can use Negative Self Assertion.

Lee: Shoot.

Me: The professors here really don't give a damn whether you pass or fail, stay or leave, fall down drunk and break your leg, or be an academic superstar.

Lee: But that's so unfair to treat someone like that.

*** Footnote**

The how-to-do-it, self-help model of the five etiological steps that can be used to describe your own psychological problem can be found in the Appendices at the end of the book (see Appendix A.) After filling out the description of your psychological problem, this information can be used to organize the practice list of environmental and personal negatives you will use to resolve your problem (see Appendix B.)

- Me: For the moment, let's skip the fact that you agreed to Fog such statements to desensitize you to the hard realities of college instead of protesting them. You claim that it's unfair. Do you know what the original and still prime meaning of fair is?
- Lee: Equitable?
- Me: No. All it means is pleasing, as in a fair-haired or blond haired boy is pleasant looking. So you are right. The attitude of the professors is unpleasant to you. Big deal. It's more important for you to realize that you don't even know the meaning of the words, which you use of your primary language.
- Lee: How was I supposed to know that?
- Me: Your excuses don't change the fact that you don't know your own primary language. If you haven't made the effort to learn — on your own — what your language means already, how in the hell can you work up the motivation to learn things in college — on your own — as your professors expect you to do.
- Lee: Their attitude means you can't talk to them about your grade.
- Me: No. You can talk to them, but they won't do anything.
- Lee: That sucks.
- Me: Perhaps, but it also can be funny. When I was a teaching assistant, I had a weekly lab class in animal learning. After the second week, a co-ed came up to me with both her and her boyfriend's weekly quiz blue books. She complained that on question six she and her boyfriend had identical answers — a very suspicious coincidence — but I had given him three points and her only two. That made the difference between a "B" and a "C" grade. So, I said to her, "Of course. How stupid of me. He doesn't deserve three points, only two like yourself." While crossing out the three and writing in a two, I told her, "Thanks for pointing that out to me." Every professor I told that story to laughed like hell and said "I wish I had thought of something like that for chronic grade complainers."
- Lee: That was cruel.
- Me: You're probably right. (Fogging) Which is a modeling response of what you are supposed to be doing if we are to accomplish anything about your problem with school.
- Lee: So what do you want me to do?
- Me: As I said before, I point out the real negatives of college, which produce a negative emotional reaction within you, and you Fog

them. Hopefully, like everyone else who has done this, we get you desensitized to those negatives. If that works, you won't need to go to a private school where the high roller parents of freshmen there can influence the faculty to be forgiving of their little darlings. Which won't apply to you anyway since you would be going there on scholarship and have no rich parents to put the fix in by promising to buy a library for the school. Okay?

Lee: Okay

Me: You seem to have great difficulty in accepting that many useful ideas conflict with one another.

Lee: Yes I do. (Fogging)

Me: College is full of contradictions.

Lee: You're right. (Fogging)

Me: I doubt that you know how to handle contradictions, personally or intellectually.

Lee: You're right I have trouble with them. (Negative Self Assertion) And I don't like them.

Me: Let's leave what you don't like to later. We have all the time in the world to do this.

Lee: Okay.

Me: Your fellow students are going to take advantage, like asking to borrow your notes just before a test and not returning them.

Lee: They probably will. (Fogging)

Me: You have to be an adult to successfully attend college.

Lee: I'm sure you do (Fogging), and I could stand to be much more adult than I am. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: College comes right out and let's you know that things are not what you were taught in high school. What you think you know is not so. You need some intellectual humility to survive there. Basically you know very little. That's why you come to college. To learn.

Lee: You are probably right. (Fogging)

Me: I am not probably right. I am right. Let's see how much you know about an easy one. Who invented the modern printing press?

Lee: Gutenberg.

Me: Right. What was the first book printed on the modern printing press?

Lee: The Gutenberg Bible.

Me: You learned that in high school?

Lee: Yes.

Me: Too bad. The first thing printed by Gutenberg was a pornographic book for a businessman. It sold like hotcakes. Gutenberg ran out of money in the middle of the bible project and had to put it aside until he earned more money. And you believed what they taught you in high school? You didn't know that they only teach you superficialities?

Lee: You're right, that dumb was me. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: It seems to me that you don't know the basic fundamentals of learning in college. Some material, which surprises you and contradicts what you have been superficially taught before. Then a lot of very boring technical detail taught to you to expose you to the field under study. You have to know this boring detail for an excellent reason. Knowing it, you can make an informed choice whether or not that field interests you enough to make a career out of it. You can't conceivably do it any other way, yet still make an intelligent choice. That's a whopping big negative inherent in going to college. You can't avoid it. You just have to do it.

Lee: You're right. That makes sense. If I want to stay in college, I have to put up with its negatives like that. (Fogging)

Me: And they print all of that boring detail up in big books which you have to read, understand, and take tests on.

Lee: You're right again. If I want to stay here, I put in the time needed to read the books, to understand them and pass the tests. (Fogging)

Me: Then going to college becomes a lot of studying with some fun interspersed occasionally, instead of vice versa. Another big negative.

Lee: Again you're right. I should have known that. (Fogging)

Me: And the professors will offer you no special help.

Lee: You're right. They probably won't. (Fogging)

Me: You want it to be simple again. Like it was in high school.

Lee: You're right. I like it simple and uncomplicated. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: You don't like it they way they do it in college. All sorts of messy contradictions, complications. You would rather it only be simple dogma you had to learn.

Lee: Yup. You are probably right. (Fogging)

- Me: As a matter of fact, you are very dogmatic.
- Lee: You're probably right. I am too dogmatic. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: You want things spelled out so simply that any high-grade moron can deal with them.
- Lee: That's me. (Giggling) Sometimes I think I operate on the moron level. (Fogging)
- Me: And as any moron can see, you don't take things seriously that are important to your future.
- Lee: You are right. I probably don't treat things as seriously as I should. (Fogging)
- Me: I hope you don't take that attitude towards your studies.
- Lee: I probably do. (Fogging)
- Me: You certainly were naive coming to college.
- Lee: That's true. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: Naive may be too positive. How about stupid?
- Lee: I certainly acted stupid during this semester. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: You were also arrogant. Very little humility. Nobody could teach you anything. You knew it all already.
- Lee: That's not true. I was willing to learn.
- Me: Learn what? How to drink beer. How to learn a new position from the *Kama Sutra*?
- Lee: You're not fair. There were reasons why I had trouble getting passing mid-term grades.
- Me: You're right, I'm not pleasant. I'm also not reality. That's what you have to deal with, reality. Not me. It's a waste of time telling me why you didn't perform well academically. Don't give me your excuses. I don't have the power to change things for you.
- Lee: That's not fair.
- Me: You're right. It's not pleasant. It's negative, but that's the way it is. You perform or you get out. Didn't you know that? Didn't any one tell you what the rules were before you started?
- Lee: Yes, but I could always get a second chance to make things up before. This place sucks.
- Me: You are right. It does suck for someone like you who believes she (he) is still in high school and can manipulate the system.
- Lee: You're right. I'd rather be in high school than here. (Negative Self Assertion)

- Me: Maybe you don't belong here. In college, I mean. Maybe you would be happier if you didn't have to put up with this particular set of negatives that point out some negatives of your own, which, it seems, you would rather not have to deal with.
- Lee: You are saying I should quit?
- Me: No, just trying to point out what you probably are afraid of your self, without saying it out loud; so then you can deal with it one way or the other. You can then take responsibility for yourself and your problems instead of always blaming them on something or somebody else.
- Lee: You're right. Maybe I don't fit in here at college. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: Well at least that's a starting point.
- Lee: For what?
- Me: For having an intelligent self-assessment discussion, not dominated by emotions, which keep you from being honest with your self.
- Lee: How do I do that?
- Me: From that starting point, you go over all the college negatives we looked at, as well as all the personal negatives, like not having decided whether you are here to party and have fun, or to have a college career leading to something important down the road.
- Lee: Can we do that now?
- Me: Not yet. We go over all the negative material again and again until you get a zero suds level about things in college and things about yourself. When we have done that, you can make real choices about what you really want to do. Stay in college with all its crap and its positive payoffs, or do something else with your life.
- Lee: Okay. I'm ready.
- Me: If you think it's unfair, you tell me.
- Lee: Why?
- Me: Because then it still bothers you. So we go back to the beginning and add in things like cutting classes, not doing homework, going out on dates the night before a test, sitting in the coop for hours socializing. You know, the kind of things someone who wants to crash and burn does.
- Lee: You're right. I've done all those things. (Negative Self Assertion)

- Me: Dumb huh?
- Lee: Very dumb. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: But correctable.
- Lee: Right on!
- Me: So let's start. You are too much of an academic wimp to be able to handle a college professor.
- Lee: You are probably right. (Fogging)
- Me: You are just too lazy to be successful in college.
- Lee: You are really right about that. (Fogging)
- Me: It seems you are not very interested in college.
- Lee: It really does bore me at times. Fogging)
- Me: You probably didn't know what to do when you graduated so you went to college. That's about the depth of your academic commitment.
- Lee: I think that might peg me accurately. (Fogging)
- Me: You are too much of an airhead to make it here.
- Lee: I've thought that myself. (Fogging)
- Me: I doubt you had a serious thought since you got here.
- Lee: I certainly could have been more serious about things. (Fogging)
- Me: I doubt that you have got your stuff together enough to pull college off as a successful enterprise.
- Lee: That's the way it seems to me a lot of the time too. (Fogging)
- Me: You are too much of a phony to make it here.
- Lee: I could certainly be more sincere with myself and others.
- Me: You are just too immature to pull this off.
- Lee: Maybe I am. (Fogging)
- Me: Ok, you have gotten this and are not defensive about college or personal negatives any more.
- Lee: You are right about that Holmes. (Positive Self Assertion)
- Me: Etc., etc., etc., and so forth.

At last report, Lee was buckling down and taking college work seriously. We will have to wait three more years to see if she will beat the college student failure odds. Most importantly and happily, however, she now can examine what she is doing that causes academic failure in a dispassionate, unemotional way, and then correct it, if she chooses, rather than denying or running away, either physically or psychologically.

Becoming a psychological adult in coping with difficulties and anxieties generated in making the transformation from supposedly neutral child to sexual adult

In this hypothetical training dialog, Freud tries to speed up the treatment process of Anna "O" when she begins to complain about how slow things are taking. This is in the later stage of her treatment wherein Freud has discovered the sexual basis of her psychological problem. Having confronted her with it, she remises from conversion hysteria paralysis of her legs, But she now believes she is blind and cannot see, therefore cannot be confronted with the psychological bete noir of her problem, drunken and philandering Papa, who accidentally aroused her sexually in one of his drinking episodes. Here Freud would attempt to get Anna "O" to expand her *Here Be Dragons* coping alternatives — Remove the Dragon or Remove Yourself, moving into the Defang the Dragon and Living with Dragons options.

Hypothetical Verbal Behavioral Therapy Dialog 14.

What Freud would have done if he had treated Anna "O" using the abstract verbal desensitization skills.

Here, of course, we assume that both Freud and Anna spoke perfect, idiomatic English, which Freud did.

Freud: Gut morgen, Frauline Anna.

Anna "O": Gut morgen, Herr Doktor Freud.

Freud: You were complaining that my experimental treatment is taking too long for you.

Anna "O": Ya. That's right. This is too long.

Freud: There is a possible shorter treatment we could try.

Anna "O": What is it?

Freud: It is from the Wild West in Amerika, where the cowboys and Indians are.

Anna "O": A cowboys and Indians treatment?

Freud: Not quite, a little joke of mine. It is from the publication of Benjamin Franklin's autobiography. He calls it his thirteenth virtue; humility.

Anna "O": You want me to be humble?

Freud: If you truly were, I think you would not have this problem. One thing we all learn, as we grow older is that life forces

us to be humble. Nothing comes easy. As the Amerikanizers say, "There is no free lunch." We learn to deal with life's slings and arrows by learning humility.

Anna "O": If you wish.

Freud: The whole purpose of this treatment is to make you comfortable with all the negatives you experienced with your Papa. If we can neutralize them, you will then be comfortable dealing with Papa and with life's vicissitudes. But we must practice being neutral here.

Anna "O": I don't want to talk about what happens with Papa.

Freud: I know. But you have a choice. We can stretch this out for a long, long time. Or we may be able to do it very quickly. You said we were taking too long. It is your choice. What do you want to do?

Anna "O": I don't want to talk about Papa.

Freud: So, that sounds like you want to do stay in bed for a long time, and we do this slowly.

Anna "O": No. I just don't want to have anything to do with Papa.

Freud: If you were afraid to swim, we would have to put you in the water so you could learn how.

Anna "O": Papa is too upsetting to me.

Freud: Of course. That is why we have to eventually deal with him. You can do it fast. Or you can do it slowly. Which way do you want to do it? Because you will have to do it sometime.

Anna "O": Will it hurt?

Freud: I'm sure it will.

Anna "O": Will it embarrass me?

Freud: I have no doubt.

Anna "O": Will I feel bad?

Freud: I can guarantee it.

Anna "O": Then why should I do this cowboy and Indians treatment?

Freud: Because it may help you get over your problem as fast as possible, so it will no longer hurt, or embarrass you or make you feel bad about yourself.

Anna "O": I was paralyzed before. Then this problem made me blind so I couldn't see. Will this new treatment make me deaf so I won't hear you?

Freud: Only if you want that to happen so you don't have to face

- your Papa through me.
- Anna "O": What is this treatment?
- Freud: I teach you how to deal with my critique of you and your personal faults so they don't bother you anymore. So you can admit you are an imperfect human and feel comfortable with that state.
- Anna "O": But what if I get frightened?
- Freud: One would hope you will, or we would not be doing things properly. It's feeling angst and getting over it that is the treatment.
- Anna "O": Can we just try it?
- Freud: Of course. Let me teach you how to deal with negatives that you, or I or anyone else says you are guilty of. Is that satisfactory to you?
- Anna "O": Ja whol.

N.B. Freud would have taught Anna "O" how to Fog and Negative Self Assert about trivial things, such as her bedclothes, robe, grooming, scratching her ear, elbow or nose, etc. After Anna had realized that she did not need to feel defensive about any of these things, a continuation of the same dialog would occur with respect to environmental and personal negatives of her psychological problem. In the continuation of the dialog, Freud would try to get Anna "O" to examine the Living With Dragons coping option.

Continuation of Dialog 14.

- Freud: You think you can deal with criticism of any personal negatives of yourself?
- Anna "O": After all that practice, I would hope so. (Fogging)
- Freud: You are not a stupid young woman, Fraulein. Why should you have this sexual problem and not someone else? What's wrong with you that allows you to have it?
- Anna "O": I don't know, but it must be something really wrong in me. (Fogging)
- Freud: That is just pretense. The mind knows everything. You just don't want to talk about it.
- Anna "O": I'm sure you're right and I am just hiding it. (Fogging)
- Freud: You would prefer that you are asexual. That sex does not affect you.

- Anna "O": That is so true. You have described my behavior exactly. (Fogging)
- Freud: And you do bizarre things not to face reality — to remain a psychological child instead of accepting your responsibility to become a psychological adult.
- Anna "O": I think that's my real problem. Wanting to remain a child and not face real life. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Freud: If your friends and family knew that you got aroused by your father — even accidentally — they would decide you were a slut, a strumpet, a whore, not a good person.
- Anna "O": They would. There is no doubt they would. (Fogging)
- Freud: You should feel guilty that happened. Don't you have any control over your sexual feelings?
- Anna "O": It seems I don't have any control over my sexual feelings, does it? (Fogging)
- Freud: You should feel ashamed of that.
- Anna "O": I should feel more ashamed than I do. (Fogging)
- Freud: Only savages and degenerates act and feel the way you do sexually.
- Anna "O": I'm sure that I am part savage and degenerate. I wish I were not, but obviously I am because of how I feel and act. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Freud: You are a moral coward too. Believing your legs were paralyzed so that you would not have to face your Papa.
- Anna "O": I probably am a moral coward or I wouldn't have done what I did. (Fogging)
- Freud: And then to believe that you were blind when I pointed out in hypnosis a fact that you could not escape, your paralysis of the legs was a psychological fantasy to escape negative reality, which frightened you.
- Anna "O": I certainly did that, yes. (Fogging).
- Freud: And you frightened off poor Dr. Breuer, with all this sexual nonsense about what is forbidden and what is not.
- Anna "O": I am a bad patient. That is correct. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Freud: You just did not take responsibility for yourself when all this happened.
- Anna "O": I did not. You are right. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Freud: You have to learn to grow up and stop being a child.

- Anna "O": I think you are right. (Fogging)
- Freud: You have to learn to think for yourself, not just kowtow to what everyone else believes.
- Anna "O": I am more afraid of what other people would think of me than I should be. (Fogging)
- Freud: It is a good thing you are smart and learn this cowboys and Indians treatment well.
- Anna "O": Why?
- Freud: Because then I would have to do what I do back in my office when a patient acts like a dumkoff. I pound on the couch with my writing tablet until they stop being difficult. I give them a choice; an angry Freud, or a foreward going therapy.
- Anna "O": I might be more of a dumkoff than I think. (Fogging)
- Freud: To be correct, you were more of a dumkoff than you thought. Past tense, please.
- Anna "O": Yes, Herr Doktor, you are probably right. (Fogging)
- Freud: Now what are we going to do with your relationship with your Papa? You can't avoid him forever if you are an adult.
- Anna "O": I should know what to do, but I don't. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Freud: What would you do if your father had something you could not affect and make better? Like a stroke, or a hereditary disease?
- Anna "O": Then I could do nothing to change it.
- Freud: If there is nothing you can do about it, then you just have to live with it by setting down conditions that make living with it at least tolerable. Nein?
- Anna "O": That makes sense. You are probably right. (Fogging)
- Freud: Can you change his drinking and womanizing?
- Anna "O": No... I don't think so. If there is a way, I don't know it. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Freud: If you cannot change it, like a hereditary disease, what do you do?
- Anna "O": Work out some arrangement like adults do, so that their lives are at least tolerable.
- Freud: Wunderbar.
- Anna "O": I hope so.
- Freud: Let us meet Papa in the next session.

Anna "O": Do you think I can deal with him?

Freud: You can deal with anyone. You are not fixated at any stage of development, but becoming a psychological adult who is in charge of her own Superego.

Anna "O": Dankershon.

If Freud were to use this type of remedy for the psychological problem of Anna "O", the dialog would be something like the above combined with elements of any of the other dialogs where denial and withdrawal are used extensively to avoid accepting the negatives inherent in the problem. The hypothetical dialog of the ex-Korean POW Vet, or of a new worker denying his messing up his new job are examples.

This hypothetical dialog about Freud and Anna "O" is not far fetched. Freud knew very well how to criticize his clients, and had lots of practice in doing so. As the former Dean of the Chicago Institute of Psychoanalysis, Dr. Gerhart Piers, personally trained and analyzed by Freud, recollected, Freud showed no reluctance in pounding on the therapeutic couch with his note pad to emphasize his point if the client appeared to be thick or had difficulty in accepting his teaching. He would have had no difficulty in being a realistic reconditioning negative stimulus source for teaching a client to Fog and/or negatively assert oneself.

Learning To Live With Dragons as a mature adult at work, as a supervisor, or employee, or in a promotion interview

One of the problems we all have to resolve during the early part of our lives is how we cope at work. Unless we are a Rockefeller, we need to learn to recognize, adapt to, and deal with the common negatives we may find on a job, as well as our own personal negatives, which a job may bring out. If we don't resolve this dilemma, we are faced with chronic denial of on the job problems and/or withdrawal from any job we may take. Let's first look what a newly promoted supervisor typically faces; a job which he knows almost nothing about — managing people and all the problems they bring to the job. After that let's look at the difficulties of a newly hired employee in his or her first career job. Lastly, let's look at the typical difficulties almost every worker faces in interviewing for either a new job, or a promotion.

The dilemma of the newly promoted manager

Over the last twenty years, I have personally taught over a thousand business managers to be more effective in their jobs by being more assertive in their communications with others. One very important part of their training was to be able to deal with negatives on the job as well as personal deficits, faults, mistakes, blind spots, outdated beliefs, etc., which compounded difficulties caused by the job. The way I did this was to verbally flood them with job and personal negatives and teach them to respond using Fogging and Negative Self Assertion.

Like anyone else, most of these managers (even those with lots of experience as well as time in the executive suite) were not psychologically sophisticated enough to avoid denial of job/personal problems as a primitive coping method. While they didn't opt for the Remove The Dragon coping option, they did use Remove Yourself often. They were very likely to withdraw from areas of the job in which they did not perform well, delegating to others their own job responsibilities instead of asking their own bosses for help. It is sad to contemplate, but newly appointed managers have the highest suicide rate of any demographic work group. Those with such a serious psychological problem over their standing as novice technical specialist managers literally do follow the primitive coping of Remove Yourself from the troublesome area rather than face the negatives therein.

The following dialog is about the problems Rod had as a new manager. Rod (or Rhoda), like many managers, was promoted to administration as a reward for his technical excellence as an engineer. He knew little or nothing about management and its problems. Consequently, he got into a lot of trouble simply because of his lack of knowledge and experience. His situation matched the model of the psychological problem with his promotion being the environmental change, his belief that he was still one of the guys and an engineer as the belief made outdated by the promotion, a series of job negatives which he knew nothing about or how to solve, a set of personal negatives revealed by his promotion, and finally, denial of the problem and withdrawal from supervisory areas wherein he performed miserably. With this analysis of his situation, we could set about to resolve it.

Verbal Behavior Therapy Dialog 15.**Becoming a psychological adult as a newly promoted business manager at work.**

- Me: It seems to me that you need help.
- Rod: I do? (Refusing to take responsibility for his own predicament)
- Me: If you don't, why did you come to me? To chat about this and that?
- Rod: No. You're right. It's just very hard for me to admit that I have problems. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: Very good Rod.
- Rod: What's good?
- Me: That you can publicly accept that you have problems.
- Rod: Is this public?
- Me: It's the smallest segment of public. Another person. Yet you seem to be having trouble understanding what I say to you.
- Rod: No I don't.
- Me: Oh Lord! Another one who doesn't engage the brain before speaking.
- Rod: You mean me?
- Me: Was I talking to the wall?
- Rod: (Silent)
- Me: (Sarcastically) Did I hurt Didum's feelings?
- Rod: You are not very sympathetic.
- Me: Listen carefully. This is a modeling response: You are probably right, I could be more sympathetic. (Fogging) But if you want sympathy, go to Mother Theresa. What are you supposed to be doing here?
- Rod: Learning how to Fog.
- Me: Are you ready to begin, or do we need to have another completely separate dialog to get you ready?
- Rod: Okay.
- Me: It's really simple. Whenever I say something disparaging about you, you simply agree that there is some probability that I may be right. Okay?
- Rod: Okay.
- Me: You will probably never learn this.
- Rod: You are probably right. (Fogging)
- Me: Chimpanzees and mentally handicapped kids have learned this faster.

- Rod: I probably am slow in learning Fogging. (Fogging)
Me: You are slow in learning anything.
Rod: You are probably right. (Fogging)
Me: You are certainly slow in learning how to supervise people.
Rod: I guess so.
Me: Was that a Fogging response?
Rod: No, but it should have been. (Fogging)
Me: You didn't know how to boss people when you were promoted.
Rod: You're right about that. (Negative Self Assertion)
Me: Didn't you need some training before they let you practice engineering?
Rod: Yes. (Negative Self Assertion)
Me: What would you think of somebody who tried to be an engineer who had no training in engineering?
Rod: Not much.
Me: So why do you think being a manager is any different. Just anybody can do it?
Rod: No, you are right, I was really dumb about it. (Negative Self Assertion)
Me: So you really screwed up?
Rod: That's about the size of it. (Negative Self Assertion)
Me: Why didn't you ask your boss for help?
Rod: I was anxious that he would find out how much I screwed up. (Negative Self Assertion)
Me: Let's talk about all these screw-ups.
Rod: Okay
Me: The most important are areas of your job from which you have withdrawn. What job functions have you tried to completely pull back from by delegating it to someone else?
Rod: I don't like to fire people.
Me: It goes with the territory.
Rod: I don't really know how to pick people for hiring. I'm afraid I would make a mistake, hire a lemon and then be stuck with him or her. (Negative Self Assertion)
Me: Hiring and firing is your most basic function as a manager.
Rod: I didn't know that. Why?
Me: Employees have the most loyalty to the person who gave them their job, and never screw with the person who can fire them. That cuts out a lot of Mickey Mouse crap on the job. After

delegating those functions, as far as they're concerned you're just somebody who checks the time cards and plays with the spec sheets.

Rod: Makes sense. If I had bit the bullet and learned how to hire and fire, I think I would have had a lot less trouble with the people I supervise. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: My guess is that they come to you when they want something, and if you say "No", they just ignore you and do what they want anyway.

Rod: You're right. That's one of the things that drive me nuts. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: And you never asked anybody how to handle this problem, or looked into taking a management class?

Rod: No. Pretty stupid huh? (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: Your people must think you are pretty dumb.

Rod: That's the sense I get too. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: I doubt if they have any respect left for you.

Rod: I think you are right. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: Once you get all these negatives under control you will have a big job getting them to respect and listen to you again.

Rod: It will be a lot of work on my part to make up for the past. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: These people used to be good friends of yours and they turned on you?

Rod: Yes, but as much as I don't like it, I can't really blame them. I was a piss poor manager. I couldn't find my ass with both hands. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: My guess is that being an engineer, you had never bothered to learn good people skills, which this job needs.

Rod: I always felt uncomfortable in dealing with other people. (Negative Self Assertion) I guess as an engineer, being a loner didn't matter.

Me: When you were promoted, you still tried to be one of the boys, instead of being a supervisory engineer who doesn't do the work, just approves or disapproves it.

Rod: That certainly was a big mistake. (Negative self Assertion)

Me: And you still took part in engineering projects instead of just supervising them. That is incredibly dumb. You spread your self so thin you couldn't do anything properly.

- Rod: Tell me about it. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: Didn't you know when you were promoted that the rules changed. You were not one of the boys any longer?
- Rod: No. I didn't, and I guess as a manager you are expected to use your own judgment about things. No one is going to keep looking over your shoulder to see if you are doing things right.
- If they have to, what's the point of hiring you? I should have known. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: You don't know enough about management to fill a paper bag.
- Rod: That's certainly a good assessment. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: You are probably spending a lot of your time trying to poop up and motivate your worst staff.
- Rod: Yes, is that wrong?.
- Me: Peter Drucker (World class management expert) thinks it is. He told me (and a thousand others at a lecture) that a manager should not waste his/her time on the least productive of his staff, but see if the staff who really produce and pay the rent for you need help, professional aid, specialty training, or assistants.
- Rod: Another thing I didn't know. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: I wonder what sort of personal qualities you have have that let you get into this whole mess. You didn't think things out.
- Rod: That's the understatement of the year. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: It really makes you look like a total ass.
- Rod: Don't I know it. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: Does your boss know what a mess you have made of things.
- Rod: I hope not. But I'd better tell him and ask for some help before he finds out for himself. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: And so on.

Rod, like thousands of other learners of the skills of Fogging and Negative Assertion, had the insight he need not automatically feel defensive about any possible or real negative, and therefore could deal with negatives in an objective manner. Is the negative important to a psychological adult? If so, how does one make it not a negative, but just a factor to be taken into consideration? If not, how does one modify one's superego or conscience so it no longer bothers one. Rod was able to do these things after training, and thereby resolve his psychological problem about being an untrained, ill prepared, newly promoted manager facing a *Here be Dragons* situation he did not know how to deal with.

Getting personal control over denial of problems at work

Here, Jim and I have a dialog about what goes on at Jim's work place. Jim has not yet in his career had the opportunity to learn how to handle a really frank discussion of any possible problems at work, and their implied negatives about Jim. Jim had particular trouble in accepting or even admitting personal negatives uncovered by his problems at work. He, like the rest of us do, wanted to Remove The Dragon that threatened his well being psychologically through denial and or rationalization. Because this is the key factor in resolving a psychological problem, at work or anywhere else, let's spend some time examining the teaching of someone like Jim with this difficulty in accepting and dealing with his/her own negatives. As in previous dialogs, this set is a compilation of the dialogs of many learners who have difficulty in accepting their own negatives, edited for confidentiality, interest, brevity, and teaching purposes.

Verbal Behavioral Therapy Dialog 16.

Becoming a psychological adult as a new employee in a first career job.

- Me: It seems to me that you are having some trouble at work.
Jim: Me? Naah.
Me: I heard you had trouble with the inversion tracking sheets.
Jim: That's the stupidest way of doing things ever set up!
Me: Still, I heard you were having trouble every time you try it.
Jim: I'm getting better at it.
Me: That's not what I heard.
Jim: Who told you about what I'm doing at work?
Me: Who isn't important. That you are in trouble is important.
Jim: I'm not in trouble. They don't like me at work. They give me the hardest parts to do, and hope I screw things up.
Me: Do you screw things up?
Jim: Of course not!
Me: So, let me see. That's two things you have trouble with at work. The flanger dissipation protocol logs, and your co-workers.
Jim: I don't have trouble with the people I work with.
Me: You just said you did: That they were out to get you.
Jim: That was just an expression. A way of saying things.
Me: So are you in trouble at work?

- Jim: No. Just a few ups and downs is all.
Me: Have you asked for help from anyone?
Jim: Why should I? They wouldn't help me if I asked.

It is obvious from that dialog, Jim has a problem at work, yet denies it exists. To help Jim cope in this area of human life — dealing with problems — with his permission, we can teach him how to respond in a more realistic and psychologically productive way to any implied, inferred, or real negatives which exist within his work place. We can give him the option of Defanging The Dragon in place of Removing the Dragon by denial and rationalization. We do this by teaching him Fogging, or how to respond to any possible negative by accepting it in a probabilistic sense; that it may or may not be true, but Jim, himself, will have to be his own judge of the probability of its truth, as well as how important it is to him. At the same time, or with a different practice dialog, I could teach him the use of Negative Self Assertion, the desensitizing verbal skill used to cope with real as opposed to probable negatives. Before this dialog, Jim has had both Fogging and Negative Assertion demonstrated to him. In this dialog, Jim uses both to cope with the embarrassing statements I present to him.

Verbal Behavioral Therapy Dialog 17.

Dealing with more negatives in a first career job.

- Me: Let's start out with some simple things Jim.
Jim: Okay.
Me: You seem very easy going.
Jim: Yes, I am.
Me: Nothing seems to bother you does it.
Jim: I try not to let it.
Me: Does anything get to you?
Jim: Not really.
Me: Well that certainly was a bold faced lie.
Jim: Are you calling me a liar?
Me: Are you saying you didn't lie?
Jim: I'm not a liar.
Me: You are supposed to be learning about how to use Fogging. Instead, you seem to want to show how you can deny things.
Jim: I'm not trying to deny anything.
Me: It sure seems like it. I called you a liar and you denied it.

- Jim: That's not denial. It's stating the truth!
- Me: So you are not a liar?
- Jim: Of course not.
- Me: You have never told a lie in your life.
- Jim: Well, maybe once or twice.
- Me: If you lie, what does that make you?
- Jim: Well I'm not a habitual liar.
- Me: Did I call you a habitual liar?
- Jim: Well no...
- Me: Did you deny being a liar?
- Jim: Not really...
- Me: Now you're telling me that when I said you were a liar, you Fogged me?
- Jim: No, I'm not saying that.
- Me: It seems to me that you didn't learn a damned thing from the Fogging exercise.
- Jim: I did. I learned how to Fog.
- Me: Then why don't you use it when I criticize you?
- Jim: I just haven't had a chance yet.
- Me: You have had 15 chances, and I haven't heard one Fogging.
- Jim: What do you want me to do?
- Me: What do you want?
- Jim: To learn how to cope better.
- Me: You seemed to agree, at least in principle, that learning to get the desensitization effects of Fogging would help.
- Jim: Yes.
- Me: Then why don't we practice Fogging?
- Jim: Okay.
- Me: Are you ready?
- Jim: I probably should be, shouldn't I? (Fogging)
(Instead of I am, which could be critiqued with: How do you really know you're ready? to sensitize the learner to thinking in terms of probability.)
- Me: Very good Jim, that was really on the ball. (Making a judgment of Jim, even a positive one.)
- Jim: No big deal. (Refusing to make a self-judgment, accepting the positive compliment.)
- Me: No big deal???? (In the best Marine Corps Drill Instructor fashion.)

- Jim: You're right. I was on the ball. (Fogging)
- Me: And you denied it!
- Jim: I didn't deny it, I just minimized it.
- Me: You did what????? (Again in a three-chevron voice.)
- Jim: You're right. I didn't Fog your critique again. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: So let's start off easy again.
- Jim: Okay.
- Me: You seem very easy going.
- Jim: Yes, I probably am. (Fogging)
- Me: Nothing seems to bother you does it.
- Jim: I try not to let it.
- Me: Does anything get to you?
- Jim: I probably react more than I should. (Fogging)
- Me: Well that certainly was different than last time.
- Jim: Yes it was, wasn't it? (Fogging)
- Me: Last time you started to lie.
- Jim: I probably did. (Fogging)
- Me: There was no probably about it. You started to lie about not reacting to things.
- Jim: You are right. I did try to make myself look better than I am. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: And you deny things that are uncomfortable to face.
- Jim: I probably do. (Fogging)
- Me: Especially at work.
- Jim: Yes, especially there. (Fogging)
- Me: You wouldn't admit before that you had big troubles with the gizmo retrostabilizer download forms.
- Jim: You're right. It was silly and stupid of me not to admit my problem. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: Problem? (With an eye that says something's fishy here)
- Jim: Okay, problems.
- Me: You denied that you had trouble with your co-workers too.
- Jim: That's true. I did. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: You wouldn't even ask anyone for help.
- Jim: You're right, I wouldn't. That was dumb. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: That does not say good things about you as a person, Jim.
- Jim: It doesn't, does it? (Negative Self Assertion)

- Me: It certainly would make an unbiased observer question your psychological sophistication.
- Jim: You're probably right. (Fogging)
- Me: And your emotional stability. You don't use your brain to solve your problems.
- Jim: It does bring my emotional stability into question. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: Looking at how you behave when things don't go right, I would have to guess that you are not very mature.
- Jim: Maybe I'm not. (Fogging)
- Me: Your judgment doesn't look too good either.
- Jim: It certainly could be improved. (Fogging)
- Me: And most bothersome, you denied anything I said which might imply something negative about you.
- Jim: (Automatically getting defensive again without thinking.) I thought it was a slur on me.
- Me: No. You didn't think about it. Not one bit. You just reacted. Like you just reacted now without thinking.

N.B. (This is approximately the point where the typical learner gets insight into what Fogging is really teaching him; to be able to accept him/herself completely without any reservation or negative emotion — the one true sign of a psychological adult. Up to this point the use of Fogging and Negative Assertion was practice. At this point it becomes an effortless learned skill usually accompanied by a smile. For example:

- Jim: Um..., Err..., (Mumbling softly) You know, I feel that you're really right about that. (Fogging)
- Me: What was that? I didn't hear you.
- Jim: (Loud and clear) I said you're probably right. I'd bet I did react without thinking. (Fogging)
- Me: And that is incredibly stupid. Not to use your brain instead of your stomach.
- Jim: It was incredibly stupid. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: It's probably been screwing your life up for a long time. Not thinking and just reacting.
- Jim: It probably has. (Fogging)
- Me: It would screw things up worse when problems occurred in your marriage.
- Jim: It sure would. (Fogging)

- Me: And with your kids.
- Jim: God. Nobody wants to think of themselves as a lousy parent. To think I might be is really bad. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: You weren't even being lousy. Just thoughtlessly making problems worse than they had to be.
- Jim: You're probably right. (Fogging)
- Me: I'm not sure this isn't some personality defect, like Freud and Jung and the rest of them dealt with.
- Jim: It could be like that. (Fogging)
- Me: Maybe you're obsessive-compulsive.
- Jim: I certainly could be. (Fogging)
- Me: Or anal-retentive.
- Jim: That too. (Fogging)
- Me: Or a hysterical personality.
- Jim: Perhaps. That sure sounds like me. (Fogging)
- Me: No, those are too esoteric.' You are more run of the mill and mundane. Just a psychological unsophisticate.
- Jim: I sure could be more psychologically sophisticated. (Fogging)
- Me: You seemed to have taken to this like a duck to water. Let's go back and look at your performance at work.
- Jim: You're right. I seem okay doing this now. (Fogging) Let's look at me at work.
- Me: It seems to me that you are having some trouble at work.
- Jim: I have trouble everywhere, at work, at the beach, on the free way, in the bathtub. You're right. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: You were having trouble with the format inversion sheets.
- Jim: Frankly I think that's the stupidest way of doing things ever set up, and boy do I have trouble with it. (Negative self assertion).
- Me: I heard you were having trouble every time you try to do it.
- Jim: Right, and I'm not getting any better at it. Maybe I should have my eyes checked or something. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: That's about what I heard.
- Jim: Anybody who looked at me try to figure them out could have told you about that. (Fogging)
- Me: You are in trouble.
- Jim: You're right. I'm in trouble. (Negative Self Assertion) I wished I had a friend at work; one who could give me some tips on how to do things right.
- Me: Do you screw things up?

Jim: Of course. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: So, lets see the two things you have trouble with at work. The flanger dissipation protocol logs, and a lack of friends.

Jim: I also have a lack of guts. I don't know why I haven't gone to my boss and asked for help. (Negative Self Assertion)

Coping with the negatives of a job/promotion interview as well as the personal negatives such an interview may cover

One of the most uncomfortable situations one can be in is a job or promotion interview. When I was originally writing this ms I was about to write, "Unless you have a lot of interview experience." But that would be incorrect since many people having lots of bad interview experiences are clearly still uncomfortable when the next interview comes around. Such interviewees, unfortunately, have not been able to desensitize themselves to all the negatives in an interviewing situation simply by experiencing it. The same thing happens to people who get upset flying in an airplane for a relatively short distance. Unless some psychological intervention is made, no learning takes place and they are just as upset the next time they fly. Fogging and/or Negative Self Assertion used as responses to negative verbal flooding are ideal ways to desensitize a potential interviewee to the possible negatives in all job or promotion interviews by running the interview until desensitization takes place.

In the next dialog, let's look at the use of Fogging and Negative Self Assertion in an interview situation, where the outcome of the interview can mean a real difference in the quality of life of the interviewee; a job he or she really wants, or a promotion with an increase in authority, responsibility, self-respect and money. This dialog is a compilation of many such teaching dialogs involving many learners including Phil, the person who had to go through an upcoming promotion interview. Phil (or Phyllis, it makes no difference) was up for promotion at his company. Phil worked in another division six months ago, where he froze in a promotion interview and looked like a total fool. Shortly after that he transferred to his present job (physical withdrawal from all reminders of the negatives encountered in the previous interview; i.e., Remove Yourself from the presence of the Dragon.) Phil had done an excellent job in his previous position, as he had also done in his present position — the reason for being considered for promotion. Phil was seriously considering refusing the promotion or even quitting his job because of the promotion interview when he spoke to me about his dilemma.

It made a lot of sense to work on his problem using verbal flooding and desensitization since it fit the etiology of a psychological problem:

- 1) environmental change equals a promotion interview.
- 2) Malfunctioning belief equals be honest as he always was in his job, which Phil confused with openness in an interview.
- 3) And 4) environmental and personal negatives equal that which we will look at in the dialog.
- 5) Withdrawal equals contemplating physical avoidance of the negative results of having to take the promotion interview.

In the first part of the teaching dialog, I simply use verbal flooding of negatives to desensitize Phil — Defang The Dragon — to as many personal and interview negatives as possible. Then we can do a practice promotion interview to see how well Phil will perform.

Verbal Behavioral Therapy Dialog 18a.

Dealing with all the possible negatives in taking a promotion interview.

Me: You've seen what Fogging and Negative Self Assertion are. Let's practice using them to desensitize yourself to negatives that might come up. Most of the negatives in an interview would center upon yourself and your performance. Is that okay?

Phil: Okay with me.

Me: You have a real problem with interviews.

Phil: You're right, I do. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: In your last one you came off like a real ass.

Phil: Boy did I ever. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: You should be ashamed of your self for that performance.

Phil: I am ashamed, and embarrassed too. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: The examiner thought something physically happened to you.

Phil: I can see why he would think that. (Fogging)

Me: You acted like something hit you on the head.

Phil: You're right. I'm sure I did act like that. (Fogging)

Me: You were incredibly unprepared for that interview.

Phil: You're right. No doubt about it. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: You looked like a mental patient in the interview.

Phil: I'm sure I did. (Fogging) I felt like one. (Negative Assertion)

Me: I can only question the competence of someone who would go into a situation the way you did.

- Phil: If I were you, I'd question it too. (Fogging)
- Me: You froze as soon as you had to open your mouth. It was sick to watch. Like someone who had to be put out of his misery.
- Phil: I certainly was miserable, (Negative Self Assertion) and I don't blame you for thinking that. (Fogging)
- Me: No one in his right mind would ever promote you after seeing you in that interview.
- Phil: I would have to agree. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: I would even question what you were doing on the job, and ask your boss to take another look at your job performance. You looked like a basket case. Maybe you were faking it on the job.
- Phil: I can understand your concern. I wouldn't blame you for feeling that way. I would too in the same position. (Fogging)
- Me: Why couldn't you make some attempt to answer the questions?
- Phil: I should have tried harder to make an attempt. That would have been the smart thing to do. (Fogging)
- Me: You have another promotion interview coming up soon. You will likely screw that one up too.
- Phil: I may. (Fogging)
- Me: God help you if you do.
- Phil: Amen. (Fogging)
- Me: You would think you would have tried to get some help in taking promotion interviews after your last disaster.
- Phil: You're right. One would think that I would do that. (Fogging)
- Me: The only thing you got going for you in this next interview is that you know the job backwards and forwards.
- Phil: You may be right there. (Fogging)

In this next part of the dialog, I role play the interviewer, to test how Phil can handle a simulated promotion interview using Fogging and Negative Self Assertion after he was desensitized to as many personal and interview negatives as possible.

Verbal Behavioral Therapy Dialog 18b.

Becoming a psychological adult as an employee taking a promotion interview

- Me: I see here Phil (looking at some papers in my hand) that you came to us six months ago. I also see that you had excellent ratings by your boss then. Why did you leave to come here to this division?

- Phil: At that time, I didn't know how to take a promotion interview. I really screwed it up because I was inexperienced. It was the first time I took one and my mind just went blank. The interviewer probably thought I had gotten banged on the head and was brain damaged. I was embarrassed. I thought it better if I transferred to another division. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: But you certainly seem okay in this interview.
- Phil: I certainly hope so. (Fogging) I wouldn't like to go thorough that experience again.
- Me: It's okay to be a bit nervous in a promotion (job) interview. We all get that way.
- Phil: Good. That's a relief because I am a little nervous. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: Your ratings here in our division are also excellent.
- Phil: That's good to hear. I think I probably could do the same thing as a supervisor. (Fogging)
- Me: It's good to be confident about yourself. Tell me what you think is most important about being a supervisor?
- Phil: Integrity. A willingness to say what you think is right, and no hesitation in saying you made a mistake. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: What else?
- Phil: I think the second most important is compromise. A willingness to work things out. I know I'm not perfect (Negative Self Assertion) and it's important to bend, even if it's just a little bit. That really helps when working with employees, I think.
- Me: Keep going.
- Phil: The ability to not overreact to things. I had to learn the hard way (Negative Self Assertion) that if you can put something off till tomorrow, it may resolve itself and you won't have to waste your time doing it.
- Me: What do you do if an employee comes to you all shook up with a problem that he or she says needs to be solved right away?
- Phil: Some of the time I'm going to be wrong with this approach (Negative Self Assertion), but I would wait at least three days to see what happens before doing anything. If the problem doesn't resolve itself in three days, then I get involved.
- Me: Is there any thing we have missed talking about?
- Phil: I'm sure there is, (Fogging) but I can't think of anything (Negative

Self Assertion)

As you can see, with the skill gained by practicing with negatives using Fogging and Negative Self Assertion, Phil was able to a) desensitize himself to negatives associated with a promotion interview — Defang The Dragon, b) forestalling his perceived need to withdraw from the proposed promotion interview or even from his job — Remove Yourself, and c) with some practice, while having no negative emotional reaction, he was prepared to turn in a very acceptable set of responses in a real promotion interview — Learn To Live With Dragons as a psychological adult.

Let's now turn to the next chapter. There we look at how one can learn to become a psychological adult while courting and seeking a mate, with all the difficulties and gray areas of relating to the other sex come into play that can sink a novice who doesn't understand the only rule of the game; it's only practice for the real thing and doesn't mean much at all.

Chapter Seven

Remove The Dragon By Hating It, Remove Yourself, Or Learn To Live With Dragons As A Psychological Adult In Courting And Dating

The closest thing to love is mental illness; To loss of love, paranoia.

Anon

*The difference between a schizophrenic and a poet
is the poet can turn it on and off.*

Harry Stack Sullivan

When I was beginning my studies as a psychologist/scientist, I worked at the Navy Electronic Laboratories at Point Loma in San Diego. My first job there was sitting in a concrete bunker, reading, by hand, miles and miles of polygraph records of arctic ice data collected by the Nautilus, the first nuclear submarine, as it made the first undersea crossing of the North Pole. After the Nautilus completed that first trip, it kept exploring the under ice polar area, sending back more arctic ice data. When the ice data I had helped read was computed and disseminated, the undersea North pole became like grand central station with the submarines of all major nations making transits this way and that. I thought it amazing none of them ran into each other. Shortly after, I earned my masters in psychology but still kept compiling data from submarines. I had transferred to the human engineering section which studied man-machine interaction, particularly about interpreting the usefulness of different types of sonar screens in anti-submarine warfare exercises.

My office mate in the psychology section was Harry, a very interesting fellow. Harry was a quiet type of man, yet, he and I would usually spend a bit of time over coffee talking about things in general before getting down to our jobs; testing and suggesting possible improvements for sonar in anti-submarine warfare. One time we talked about women and Harry told me he was divorced. He also said he didn't know his ass from his elbow about adult relationships when he first got married as a youngster of twenty-one. He said that was one of the reasons his marriage failed. When I asked him about his current girl friend — whom I had seen was a beautiful young lady from a picture on his desk — Harry told

me they had broken up. I asked him why. He told me she was pushing for marriage and he didn't want to marry her. When I again asked why, he said something very surprising; "I don't want to have to spend the next three years, with all the work and energy involved, teaching her how to behave as an adult in a close relationship." Now one could conclude that Harry was a male chauvinist from that comment, but if one came to that conclusion, one would be wrong. Harry was referring to the maturity of participants in a relationship, not their sex. He himself admitted that when first married he was a callow youth; a relationship klutz. So Harry's comment had nothing to do with sex, but experience and knowledge, of which his current girl friend had very little. Basically, the operative words in his description of her was *girl friend*, instead of woman.

Incidentally, during this same time, Harry and I both received letters from the State of California on the same day, informing us that we could be grandfathered in as certified psychologists under the new Psychology Licensing Law, if we wanted to pay the 100 dollar fee. Harry just laughed at their offer, while I thought about it and could not imagine myself in any way doing clinical psychology, therefore needing licensing. Ten years later, I spent two years of a post-doc preparing for the state licensing exam. So much for one's ability in the early twenties to see what the future might bring, or one's interests at some future time. This mistake made me appreciate what developing Systematic Assertive Training years later had taught me, and what we are dealing with in this chapter: Reality is not fact, but probability, and becoming a psychological adult means you can cope with this flexible character of personal reality.

Is dating for sex, or to Learn To Live With Dragons as a psychological adult in relationships with the opposite sex?

Getting back to where we were at NEL, you might ask, "What does Harry's comment about possible marriage partners have to do with dating or courting?" The answer is, of course, everything. Let me first say that sex is only one minor part of courting, since sex and sexual attraction habituates so rapidly. If you are a person who dates only to have sex, that's fine. To each his/her own. But then this section of the *ms.* is a waste for you. After a period of dating, you will move on with little or no success in building a lasting relationship or learning how to. To maintain a close relationship, you need a lot more positive reinforcers besides sex. So how you view sex in a dating relationship is up to you. But if you place

it above all else, the relationship will last only as long as the sexual interest. And with all the other attractive pebbles on the beach, sex by itself does not stand a chance as a relationship reinforcer.

Harry basically stated the truism that the way you become mature enough to successfully carry off a close relationship is by learning through experience. At this point let's be clear that dating and courting are not the same thing. As I pointed out above, you may only date because of sexual interests, but courting has the aim of seeing if a close relationship is possible, and for our purposes, to learn how to successfully operate within a long term close relationship.

To become a psychological adult in the sociosexual area of human interaction, there are two important parts of dating/courting which you must pay attention to, and accept; your partner's negatives (the environmental negatives) and your own personal negatives. Both of these need to be heeded to make courting/dating the means for gaining the psychological maturity and experience required to maintain a close adult relationship.

How can you tell what your future partner will look and act like twenty years from now?

The first part is to get to know your date as much as possible, especially her (his) negatives. This is important even though she (or he) may not be your everlasting love. It's practice for knowing how to deal with your true love's faults — perhaps years down the road. Let me give you a real example of this. When I was teaching Psych I at UCLA to batches of 500 students in the Department's big lecture hall, the students asked for practical applications of psychology which would apply to their lives. I said "Fine. Let me give you one with trivial biological implications, but formidable psychological applications." I asked for a show of hands of students who were going steady, or were serious about someone. Half the class raised their hands. I said then let's look at the males first. I recommended that before one takes the big step of getting married, or even living together, make sure you meet your intended's mother in a social situation long before any proposal is made. One reason for this is trivial. I said that if you see what Mom looks like, in all probability, then you will know, when you wake up twenty years from now, what you will see lying on the pillow beside you. Much more importantly, if you can observe Mom's behavior in a bunch of situations, in all probability, you

44p.1 will know how your intended will basically behave after you get married because of Mom's modeling and indoctrination of daughter in childhood. I then pointed out to the women that the same analysis applies to Dad, so it is important to their own self interest they meet him before tying the knot. This practical application of learning, child rearing and indoctrinated beliefs was met with a thunderous silence. I had just pointed out to them an area wherein *Here Be Dragons*. If looks could do anything, I would have been ground into dust on the lecture hall floor. No more practical applications of psychology were requested of me by those students because I had just exposed them to some of the negatives in an expanded environment of marriage that they would have to learn to deal with to remain there without retreating, denying, or rationalizing.

Although the above example indicates the importance of learning how to see the whole person you are courting, warts and all, it gives no information on how to make this assessment. The key is to first deal with your own personal negatives — Defang The Dragon. Once you have been desensitized emotionally to your own real negatives, you have absolute control over them. That means you can display one or two on a date to see how your partner deals with them. To see if he or she is enough of a psychological adult to Learn To Live With Dragons. Doing this will give you some indication of how much stability and what strength of character your partner has; very important qualities for living together. This may sound a bit strange to you; first desensitizing yourself to things that cause you real pain and embarrassment, and then using these same desensitized negatives to see how well your date copes with negatives to evaluate her (him) as a person. If you want to become a psychological adult in sociosexual situations, you need such experience and maturity, and using such procedures will help you become a mature person who can cope with damned near anything. Although this has been written from what one would assume to be a male viewpoint, it applies equally as well to the woman reader. Teaching dialogs follow later in this chapter for both sexes.

We shall also talk about how to end a long term courting relationship when it is going nowhere or sours as they sometimes do. It is important to know how to gracefully end such a relationship so there is dignity and good will on both sides, even if you have to fake it so as not to lose face. Learning To Live With Dragons applies equally as well in ending a close relationship as in building it. As the opening quotations suggest, if you do not wish to be devastated by love, like the poet, you learn how to turn

it on and off. If you can do it for love, which you can, as we will see later, you certainly can do it for the less serious feelings involved in courting. More about this in detail at the end of the courting section.

With the teaching purpose and schematic outlined above in mind, let's look first at John, a young man in his early twenties who complained to me that he became very nervous on dates and because of the press of school work — he was in pre-law aiming for admittance to Harvard — his initially low dating frequency had tapered off to zero in the last six months. I asked how much did he socialize over a cup of coffee or a burger down at the student coop with girls he knew. That type of fraternization had gone to zero also during the past six months. So I asked what was different from the dating he did in high school and that in college? His response was "I didn't date girls in high school. I didn't have the money or the time." If John had a psychological problem about courting, I could see the last step in the etiology of the problem — Remove The Dragon or Remove Yourself — by denial, some rationalization or excuse making, and withdrawal from the courting payoff environment. But what I didn't readily see was the change in the sociosexual environment that would have initiated the problem in the first place. So I asked him why he started dating in college if he hadn't felt such a great need to do so in high school? He told me that his parents had started to put lots of pressure on him to be less nerdish and to soup-up his social life. That pressure, of course, would have put him in a dilemma such as I had in high school described in Chapter One, when I had conflicting beliefs about relating to teenage girls and learned, like John did in college, *Here Be Dragons*.

If you are smart and mature, everything you do before you are twenty-five, including your relationships with the opposite sex, is just practice for the real thing

In working with teens in high school, I try to give them a lesson I had to learn the hard way by myself. I tell them that everything they do, socialization, dating, relating, even getting emotionally dependent upon someone else because of restricting his or her payoff environment, is just practice for when they are in the second half of their twenties; That's when the things they do really begin to count. The only exceptions to this are school grades, which either open or close important doors, those which will have effects for the rest of their lives.

For John, his lack of high school dating — his lack of sociosexual practice — his need to learn the rules and get enough experience so nothing would shake him up — was the problem. In beginning his dating/courting experience in college, John found a lot of environmental and personal negatives which he would rather not deal with, as well as his malfunctioning belief that courting was as "instinctual" as breathing; nothing needed to be learned. John was shocked when I told him about my old friend Harry and his observations on men and women years ago.

His belief was directly contrary to the one I was forced to develop from experience when I was a teen. For me, dating and courting was a trial and error procedure. After every less than perfect time on a date — to describe it kindly — I asked myself the simple question: "What have you learned from this? What could you have done to make it less miserable, even fun?" Before becoming the suave, sophisticated, young man I evolved into, I had to ask that question many, many times. I concluded that John was at the very beginning of that learning process. However, he would not have to go about learning sociosexual reality in the tortuous way I did. We could practice dealing with those personal or environmental negatives to which I had to be desensitized by having many, very inefficient Socratic Dialogs with myself.

Let's now look at this teaching process with John as he goes through a courting desensitization procedure in the next dialog, and then we can look at the experiences of Megan, a young woman in her twenties, who undergoes the same process of dealing with dragons in dating and courting in the dialog following that. These dialogs, like all the others, are a compilation of the experiences of many learners besides John and Megan, and are edited for confidentiality, brevity, interest and teaching purposes.

Psychological Problem Type III:

Irrational, emotional self-assessment in dating/courting environments preventing the use of one's own personal relationship negatives for evaluating potential future mates.

Verbal Behavior Therapy Dialog 19.

Becoming a psychological adult as a man in courting situations.

Me: You understand that before you can ask yourself what is wrong or right with your dating/courting techniques, you have to be desensitized to all the negatives that are inherent in dating as

well as yourself?

John: Yes.

Me: Why do you think that your desire to date women has fallen off to zero over the past year?

John: Dunno... Maybe I just don't know anything about dating.

Me: I'm certain you don't know your ass from your elbow, especially with respect to dating.

John: Didn't I just say that?

Me: Did you Fog it?

John: No, you're right, I didn't. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: Do you want me to tick off the long, long list of negatives about yourself that screws up dating?

John: I probably should want that. (Fogging)

Me: Minutes of dialog before we get one Fogging response. What do you think of that?

John: Pretty bad, huh? (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: Maybe you lack a certain sensitivity to things going on around you. Like you are supposed to get with it in using Fogging to desensitize yourself to personal deficits RE dating and it takes minutes just for you to get started. Maybe you do the same thing to your dates? I'll bet you don't take the trouble to learn anything about them.

John: I'll have to see on my next date, but you are probably right. (Fogging) If I do it here, what's to stop me from being as insensitive to things on a date. (Negative Self Assertion) That would really sink me, wouldn't it?

Me: Do you pay attention to your date? I'll bet you don't.

John: What do you mean?

Me: What do I mean? A simpleton would know what I mean. Perhaps you are a bit dense on dates and don't understand what your date is interested in or wants, etc.

John: You're right. I'll bet I don't pay enough attention to her. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: Do you know how to talk to her?

John: Again, I admit I'm pretty dense. (Negative Self Assertion) What do you mean, "know how to talk to her?" You and I are talking right now.

Me: I see that you don't know how to talk to a date. The first thing you do is talk about her; her interests, her hobbies, her classes,

her academic boo boos as well as successes, etc.

John: You're right. I didn't know it was important on how to talk to her about those things. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: That's rather dumb, don't you think?

John: Yes, quite dumb. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: You act like taking a girl on a date is like taking a dog for a walk. Keep her on a leash and that's all that's needed.

John: You're right. What can I say? Pretty lame on my part. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: Also, it seems like you acted like a klutz on these dates. Screwed up picking them up on time. Was late for the show. Didn't get the right address of the restaurant. Etc.

John: That was pretty klutzy wasn't it? (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: It seems like you didn't care.

John: Tell me about it. (Fogging)

Me: I'll bet you didn't even throw out some compliments which cost you nothing. Like looking at her and smiling until she asks you what you are smiling about. Then you tell her you're smiling because you feel so good being her date.

John: I should have told her something like that?

Me: You should have told her that, even though it sounds so corn ball. Most compliments are cornball and they still make the other person feel good. She was supposed to feel bad or bored on the date with you?

John: I should have told her something like that. God, I really am dumb about this. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: You should have told her that too, and smiled when you told her.

John: That I'm dumb on dates?

Me: That you are not very experienced with dates, but you feel very comfortable talking to her, including your own personal faults.

John: Well, it's true, I am not very experienced.

Me: I'll bet that you didn't tell any of them how nice they looked when you picked them up?

John: They like that huh?

Me: You are convincing me that you are dumber than whale shit when it comes to girls.

John: I do sound dumber than whale do-do. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: I'll also bet you tried to be macho on your dates and bombed.

John: How did you know that?

Me: Fellows your age are impressed by macho. When psychological maturity comes, you put aside things like wanting to be a football player and get down to real life problems.

John: Well, I certainly haven't been dealing with life in a realistic way. Especially on my dates. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: Why do you go out on dates? What do you want? To score sexually?

John: Of course.

Me: Doesn't make sense. If all you want is sex, there are girls on campus who will put out for anybody. They could suck the chrome off a trailer hitch. Why not date them?

John: It means something with the girls I dated. It means nothing with the campus sluts.

Me: So not only do you want to get laid, you want to be complimented for it?

John: You're probably right (Fogging)

Me: You want these girls to put out and then thank you for an extraordinary sexual experience? "Think nothing of it Maam. Captain Phallus, at your service."

John: You're right. It does sound silly, doesn't it? (Fogging)

Me: Let's point the finger in the right direction. It does not sound silly. You do!

John: You are absolutely right. I do sound silly. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: You don't even know what a date is for, do you? I'll bet you think it's a chance to get laid.

John: You're right, I thought I knew, but after this, I really haven't the slightest idea what a date is for. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: As I said before, you can get laid anywhere. A date is with a girl or woman who interests you and with whom there might be enough compatible interests to form a close relationship. Then you can learn from that relationship so if you are able to find someone gutsy enough to marry you later, you have a fighting chance. The whole purpose of courting and dating is not to have fun, but to learn how to deal with someone else's negatives — someone from the general population who is not a saint. You were planning to marry Mother Theresa maybe? It's clear you haven't the slightest idea of a date's purpose.

- John: You're right. (Negative Self Assertion) If anything, I thought any long-term relationship would be based upon sex.
- Me: Like she couldn't get sex from any of a dozen BMOC's if she wanted? If you throw a stick on the quad, you hit six of them.
- John: I know I couldn't match up to them on sex appeal, looks and money. (Negative Self Assertion) I could only beat them on smarts, maybe.
- Me: Then use your smarts to whip this dating problem.
- John: I need to try. (Fogging)
- Me: With this absolute poverty of knowledge of how to behave on a date, what to do on a date, and even what a date is for, you are surprised that you bombed out with these girls? You picked them up maybe, at the local mental hospital? You thought they were in-patients?
- John: It seems like it doesn't it? (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: Why don't we review your few dates this year and how you screwed them up?
- John: Okay.
- Me: Your first date was with Marsha. Your feeble attempt at humor with her was to ask if her middle name was mellow. She didn't even respond except with a look that questioned if she was going out with a clod.
- John: You're right. I really screwed that up. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: As if she hadn't heard that a million times before and wasn't thoroughly sick of it.
- John: I should have thought of that. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: You were trying to impress her with your wit and smarts?
- John: It seems pretty stupid now doesn't it? (Fogging)
- Me: You took her to a movie without asking her if there was one she would like to see?
- John: Yea. I thought she would enjoy watching Rambo Meets Godzilla. Another stupid move right? (Fogging)
- Me: Your next date was Sally, the student nurse. With this one you started to talk about the pain in your groin, and asked her what could be causing it.
- John: I thought I should talk about something that would interest her professionally. I thought she could do that or take it as a joke. Another dumb idea, I guess. (Fogging)

- Me: And she told you that if you wanted a free sex consult, you should go to student health.
- John: About as embarrassing as it can get. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: You seem to come up with brilliantly thought out dumb moves for screwing up your dates.
- John: I certainly do Ollie. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: But the best of all was shoving your last date into the pool at a cocktail party.
- John: That really was an accident. I got shoved from the rear. But it certainly was stupid. (Negative Self Assertion) I was so sorry I bumped her into the pool. But it was also funny.
- Me: Yes, your date appreciated your laughter all the way to the phone to call a taxi to get her home. She wouldn't get within ten feet of you after that.
- John: That's true, and I don't blame her. (Negative Self Assertion) But it sure as hell was funny. I tried to apologize the next day. She wouldn't even speak to me.
- Me: This may be a waste of time. If the word has gotten around, you may not be able to find a date on campus. We only have thirty five thousand students.
- John: You may be right. I may be a date pariah. (Fogging)
- Me: Okay, you seem to not be too upset with all these personal negatives. Let's try a review of your dates now to look at their negatives, e.g., your environmental ones. Let's see what you come up with not feeling so emotional about your negative dating experiences.
- John: Okay.
- Me: That Marsha didn't have much of a sense of humor, did she?
- John: Yea. Even though I tried an old joke she probably had heard before, I think she was pretty critical of me for that. (Fogging)
- Me: Why was she so critical?
- John: I'm just guessing, but maybe I was the best she could come up with for a Saturday night date, and she probably resented it. (Negative Self Assertion plus Fogging)
- Me: Resented what?
- John: Maybe she felt that she had to have a date to keep up with the Joneses in her sorority, and I was the only one who asked her.
- Me: In your shoes, that would make me feel pretty bad, and perhaps a bit irritated at her being bitchy because you were not the best

date she ever had.

John: I think you hit the nail on the head. She was pretty bitchy just because I told a stale joke and didn't come up to her image of whom she should be going out with. That doesn't say much about me that's positive, does it? (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: Do you care about her hang-ups?

John: I shouldn't but I guess I do (Fogging). That's something I will change.

Me: Sounds good. How about the next one, the student nurse.

John: Sort of the same thing. At least I was trying and she acted like I was a cretin with venereal disease. She didn't have a sense of humor either.

Me: Why not?

John: Same reason, I guess. I was not her perfect date. She's probably hoping to marry a Doc, and I was just someone to go out with in the meantime. Maybe I should have worn a stethoscope. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: Maybe you need the attitude you took on your last date when you accidentally bumped her into the pool. You were really sorry, but it was funny too. Can you get that attitude towards Marsha and the nurse?

John: Like don't take this seriously?

Me: Do you intend to marry any of these gals you dated?

John: No.

Me: Then aside from learning about how to cope with a woman's good and bad sides, why should you take this seriously. It's just practice and a chance to have some fun too.

John: I think you may be right. (Fogging)

Me: Why don't we replay those dates and their critical points with that attitude?

John: Okay. (Beginning) Marsha, your middle name isn't mellow by any chance, is it?

Me: (Filthy look) Humph.

John: (With empathy) I'll bet you have heard that a million times since kindergarten. I got teased a lot then too. Mine was four eyes because of these glasses.

Me: At least you know how bad it can make you feel.

John: Yes, but I decided that stupid things like that were not going to affect my sense of humor. If I am called four eyes now, I just

smile. Bet you a nickel it works a lot better than getting grumpy like you did just now.

Me: How about the movie choice?

John: Simple. (beginning) Marsha. I like action films. Rambo meets Godzilla is on at the Bijou. Is that okay with you or is there another one you would rather see? There's a tearjerker down the street.

Me: Sounds good. Let's try the student nurse.

John: Okay (Beginning) So you're a nurse. Do you know what can cause a pain in the groin? I've had it all week.

Me: If this is a sexual come on, forget it. If you hurt, go to student health for a V.D. check up.

John: Wow, you really are Nancy Nurse. You sound just like my fifth grade nurse when I refused to take my cough medicine. She scared the hell out of me. Sorry I'm not a Doc who's taking you out. It's just me. How do you like lawyers?

Me: So what do you think the point of all this is?

John: It seems to me that you don't take any crap from any of your dates. If they try it, hand it right back in a cordial, adult manner. Then see where you can go from there.

In this teaching dialog, three things were done; first, to desensitize John to his personal negatives relative to courting and dating; second, to desensitize John to the environmental negatives which his dates produced; third, and most satisfying to him, to use his own emotionally controlled personal negatives as a means for coping with some of his date's negatives in a psychologically adult manner — to Learn To Live With Dragons. Although only a few negatives from dates were dealt with in this dialog as examples, it matters not how many the learner experiences on a date. All he need do is be unemotional to any negative presented to him by using Fogging and/or Negative Self Assertion as a response to the negative dumped in his lap. Then, his (or her) job is to, as my old friend Harry put it, "teach her how to behave as an adult" towards him, by showing a different, less childish and hurtful way of interacting.

This coping, of course, is to allow him to get beyond his date's negatives in a psychologically sophisticated and mature manner for the purposes of seeing if any sort of relationship is possible and/or wanted. John put it best himself when looking at this purpose: "You don't take any crap from any of your dates. Then see where you can go from there." Truer words were never spoken, especially for young women dating immature

young men. Now let's look, as promised, at the same procedure for teaching Megan, a woman in her early twenties, how to cope with her own personal negatives and those of her dates who court her.

Megan is one of a number of young women whom I have acted as a coach for in teaching them how to cope with male/female relationships. Particularly in becoming confident in themselves, realistically evaluating themselves as productive, worthwhile young women, as well as being adult and having an adult perspective towards the males with whom they interact each day, or on a date. Megan came to me because of feeling insecure about herself, and one of her insecurities was dating and courting.

Oddly enough, Megan had a psychological problem similar to John's, but also similar to mine as a teenager relating to teenybopper sexuality. Megan had conflicting information on male sexuality; some were like all the males she had ever known — normal as she put it. Others she described as louts. She had two bad experiences on dates wherein the male did not want to hear "No." She did not experience date rape, but only because she told her date she was working on a black belt in karate and if he kept up his pawing, she would have to drive him to student health to get his nose fixed. After this happened twice, she had stopped dating. With that sequence of events we can see the beginning and end of the etiology of a psychological problem; the change in the dating payoff environment with the introduction of two very bad dates, and withdrawal from that environment as a means of coping with the problem. There were certainly environmental and personal negatives galore, but the most interesting part of the etiology was the set of beliefs about dating and relationships, which were malfunctioning as a result of that specific change of male aggression being introduced into the dating environment.

Megan had a set of traditional beliefs, which many women have about sexuality, relationships, and marriage. The problem with these beliefs was compounded shortly after her bad luck dates when her mother visited her on campus and kept asking why she didn't find some nice young man and get married, produce grandchildren, etc., etc., etc. After all, her mother argued, she never finished college when she met Megan's father, and never regretted it. This pressure by Mom, in part, produced Megan's poor coping of withdrawing from dating entirely. Megan rationalized to herself that the only way she would be her own woman and resist Mom's wanting to live life again through her, was to finish her degree, and then see what happened on the sociosexual scene.

Megan agreed that it would be pleasant to date a normal fellow again,

but that the negatives of her bad experiences made her cringe even with the thought of dating. She did agree to use Fogging and Negative Self Assertion to desensitize the dating environment negatives as well as her own personal negatives revealed by the bad dates as a step in getting over her problem. In the following teaching dialog we do just that, Defang The Dragon. In this dialog as in all the others, we compile situations and responses from a number of learners for the broadest teaching purposes. This teaching method of compiling the broadest possible types of responses, however, makes Megan look very much like someone with a personality disability. Disregard that appearance since it is only an artifact of the teaching method.

Verbal Behavior Therapy Dialog 20.

Becoming a psychological adult as a woman in courting situations.

- Me: You understand why we are doing this? You have some heavy duty emotional negatives about yourself and about dating that are blocking you from getting on with normal life experiences. You need to get rid of them.
- Megan: I understand.
- Me: I will play the heavy in this dialog we will have to desensitize you to these negatives.
- Megan: Okay.
- Me: It will not be pleasant.
- Megan: I'm sure it won't (Fogging)
- Me: Oh. You're right on the ball from the start.
- Megan: You bet. (Fogging)
- Me: My, you are a clever one.
- Megan: Others have said that beside you. (Fogging)
- Me: Okay, you know how to Fog, so let's get to work.
- Megan: I think we should. (Fogging)
- Me: I don't think you have good judgment about males.
- Megan: After those two dates, I would have to agree with you. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: Don't you have the ability to read someone before you get into a compromising situation? (All learners are instructed when presented with a question to treat it like a simple negative.)
- Megan: It sure seems like I didn't for those two jerks. I must have been blind. (Fogging)
- Me: It really doesn't say much about you as a mature woman.

Megan: I would think not. (Fogging)

Me: You must have the taste of a teenager. If he's a hunk, then that's all that's important.

Megan: I probably did let that influence me. (Fogging)

Me: I mean, really. What was on your mind? Did you have that traditional belief of women that the male should take care of you and therefore you had nothing to worry about?

Megan: I did feel that way somewhat about my dates. (Negative Self Assertion) And that's part of what's bothering me. Like I want to be brainless and not have to look out for my self. That really worries me. Like I may be really neurotic. (Fogging)

Me: What do you think giving a message of "I want to be taken care of" means to those two jerks who gave you a bad time? Even if it was a subtle message.

Megan: Like I really wanted to have sex with them?

Me: What do you think?

Megan: I think you may be right. (Fogging)

Me: If you really buy into that "If I am Jane, then you must be Tarzan" philosophy enough to get in trouble with a pair of jerks, what does it do with the normal guys?

Megan: What do you mean?

Me: What do you mean, "What do you mean?" You don't have to be a rocket scientist to know what I meant.

Megan: You're right I should know what you mean (Fogging), but I really don't. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: Do you lay that "I want to be taken care of" stuff on the normals you date?

Megan: (First thinking) I guess so...

Me: Do you or don't you?

Megan: I probably do. (Fogging)

Me: What kind of reaction do you get to it?

Megan: Maybe this explains the unpleasant reactions I got from some of the guys I liked the most. Like they thought I was kind of weird and made me feel weird.

Me: What did they do to make you feel that way?

Megan: One cut the date short. He made me feel like I didn't match up to his expectations. I probably didn't. (Fogging)

Me: It sounds to me like you really have bought into the traditional female indoctrination. You have to get married by a certain

time, and get your social status from who you marry, etc.

Megan: Part of me does feel that way. (Negative Self Assertion) I guess that comes across in how I feel and behave on a date. (Fogging)

Me: That would mean that you are always evaluating the guy on a date. If he doesn't match up, your behavior may indicate that. If you have a habit of being bitchy, I would guess that would come across and make the guy feel uncomfortable.

Megan: I think that has happened. I do get bitchy at times even though I don't like it. A very bad habit. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: For example?.

Megan: I'm putting this together now from memory. But another guy stopped talking to me except for yes/no after I decided that he wasn't my ideal. I tried to get him to talk but it didn't work. That really made me feel guilty as hell. We went to the party; he started talking to other people and ignored me. Finally I got a ride home from a friend. Somehow I must have let him know I was disappointed in him. That was a crappy thing to do. Who am I to go around judging who is okay and who isn't? And I guess it was my fault even though he wasn't mature enough to see that I acted like a silly bitch. Childish; Two kids hurting each other. So what if he wasn't, perfect. We still could have had some fun on the date. (Negative Self Assertion) Maybe he would have turned out to be a good friend.

Me: What else did your dates do that was negative?

Megan: Most of them were very nice guys. They made me feel like they were taking their cousin from out of town to the movies. I felt like I had no sex appeal at all. (Negative Self Assertion) I felt they were being supercilious towards me. That really hurt my feelings and made me feel like a real loser. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: Well you did something to produce that reaction in a bunch of fellows. Something dumb. Did your feeling that you were man-hunting come across to them?

Megan: I don't know. If I did, it was dumb. It must have. What a silly way to feel. That you have to get engaged or at least find some one you could marry as soon as possible. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: How would you act so that they would get turned off and politely treat you like Cousin Matilda, just in from the farm?

- Megan: My guess is that it happened when I would disagree with them in conversation. (Fogging)
- Me: Like they didn't know how to deal with some one who knew as much as them, or was assertive enough to disagree?
- Megan: You got it. (Fogging)
- Me: Perhaps that happened because you didn't know about Fogging then.
- Megan: Maybe, but I don't follow. (Fogging)
- Me: Do you know about Ben Franklin's thirteenth virtue?
- Megan: No, tell me.
- Me: Basically it was Fogging. Franklin said in his autobiography that he was fighting with everyone publicly until he his thirteenth virtue came to the fore. It went something like this. "The right honorable gentleman from Virginia has a point well taken which we can all learn from (Fogging), but I would like the members to also consider a different view..." Franklin claimed it was responsible for most of the success he had as a legislator, a statesman, and ambassador.
- Megan: So, if I was talking to Joe on a date...?
- Me: If Joe said that he thought it would rain tomorrow, your could say, for example, "You may be right Joe (Fogging), but those clouds look awful ominous right now. I think if we keep the top down, we are going to get wet. It may be fun drying each other off, but I think I'd catch pneumonia."
- Megan: I could do that. Before I just disagreed and ignored their inability to cope with my disagreement. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: So let's try that. I'll be Allen, Enrico, Moisha, Fisher, etc.
- Megan: Okay.
- Me: You have to realize Megan, stock derivatives is a complex subject.
- Megan: I'm sure that's true Allen (Fogging), but I would appreciate you explaining how one guy in Orange County and one guy in Singapore could use them to screw things up so badly as to lose several billion dollars just because interest rates went up instead of down.
- Me: Megan, you need differential calculus to really understand the mathematics of statistics and statistical tests.
- Megan: You may be right there Fishy (Fogging), but can't I take the first moment about the mean as a given and still understand the

normal curve as a basis for the stat tests?

Me: Megan, I could explain the Kabala in Judaism a dozen times to you and I still don't think you would understand it.

Megan: You may be right Moisha, (Fogging). But how much harder is it to understand than Reverend Ike's philosophy about making money. I certainly understood that in no time at all.

Me: You don't know what a quark is? Megan, quarks are the basic building blocks of matter.

Megan: I'm sure that's true if you say so Enrico (Fogging), but just because they supposedly have discovered the top quark, that means we know everything about matter and it's creation? I am very suspicious of people who make claims using the words; always, never, everything or nothing.

Me: So what would you be doing in taking the trouble to handle their negatives such that you don't get bent out of shape or don't bend them out of shape?

Megan: I'm learning how to deal with a real life mate in the future with all his negatives instead of pretending that I'm Snow White and someday my prince will come.

Me: The seven dwarfs give you a round of applause.

Megan's responses need no comments that would add anything to this type of practice/teaching dialog for learning what is important in courting that will have a significant impact upon future close relationships. However, I pointed out earlier that the path of courting and dating is not always smooth. It is both my personal and clinical experience that in the beginning, when you are young and inexperienced, courting can be like driving a car with square wheels.

What do you do when a long term courting relationship breaks up?

Many daters become steady daters. Once this happens, even with a relationship that both parties acknowledge as not leading to marriage, living together or an arrangement having some degree of permanency, emotional connections and some degree of emotional dependency is established. When this type of relationship breaks up, it is not unusual to see one of the partners behaving as if the other had stabbed a knife in his or her back. If a courting relationship breaks up, let me tell you the significance of that event. That's the way the proverbial ball bounces, or the

cookie crumbles, or shit happens. And that's all the significance it has. In a courting relationship, unfortunately, we most often complain to the instigator of the break up how badly we are being treated and how we feel, hoping, I suppose, to make the other person feel bad and guilty. What we don't realize is that if the other person really gave a rat's tail for how we felt, he or she wouldn't have done the dirty deed in the first place. So we are, in responding in the most predictable and common way to a courting relationship breakup, placing a bet on a dead horse; in present terms trying to Remove The Dragon. In whining we usually do not fill our former steady with sympathy, but disgust and contempt.

It is much better to learn how to become a psychological adult in this type of situation by examining all your personal negatives, especially the one of being excessively emotionally dependent upon your former steady. Then you can, for preserving your own dignity at least, present quite a different face to this emotional breakup. So different a face that your former steady will very likely carry away a radically different picture of you than the one you gave which may have been part of the reason for the breakup — a more mature adult who has Learned To Live With Dragons. Let's now look at a short dialog which teaches Dick how to respond to the end of a courting relationship. While a male example is illustrated, the material covered would apply just as well to a woman having the same emotionally difficult breakup problem.

Verbal Behavior Therapy Dialog 21.

Becoming a psychological adult as a youthful person in responding to your partner in the emotional breakup of a long term courting relationship.

Me: You already know Fogging and Negative Self Assertion. Let's review how you made a complete emotional ass of yourself in dealing with the breakup of you and Jean.

Dick: Okay, but it still twists me inside even now. Can you imagine how bad I felt? No wonder I alternated between acting like I was in an afternoon soap and a little kid.

Me: That's the whole object of the Fogging and Negative Self Assertion teaching exercise; to eliminate or get rid of those feelings by going over — and over, if necessary — the personal and environmental negatives involved in breaking up.

Dick: I'm willing to try it.

Me: First, you said that she had taken up with someone else when

she went to school in Washington. You found out when she sent you a Dear John letter?

Dick: Yes.

Me: She was probably greatly relieved to not have to put up with someone as emotionally dependent upon her as you were.

Dick: You are probably right. (Fogging) And I behaved like a child. (Negative Self Assertion) She was probably relieved not to have to deal with that also. (Fogging)

Me: She probably was attracted to that new guy because he was a hell of a lot more mature than you.

Dick: I have no doubt of that. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: Do you know the classical Spanish saying, "*Si la corazon muy lejos, muy locos?*"

Dick: No.

Me: It means, roughly, "the heart very far away is very crazy." If you don't stick together, who knows what will happen.

Dick: That describes what happened perfectly.

Me: When Jean came back home to visit, your behavior was not that of a psychological adult.

Dick: No. As a matter of fact, I thought I was a little bit crazy then. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: You sat there on the Art quad when Jean returned from her trip and didn't say anything to her. It looked like you were sulking.

Dick: You're right I probably did look like I was sulking (Fogging). In fact I was sulking (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: She came over to you and asked how you were. You didn't do anything. Even just say "Hi" and then leave.

Dick: True. She did. And I didn't do anything to make the situation better. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: You wanted it to be bad.

Dick: Yes. Pretty juvenile of me. Petty. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: When she asked you how you were, you mumbled some rubbish about having your heart in your hands — God, what puke you made up.

Dick: That's even embarrassing to hear you say it instead of myself. What the hell was wrong with me? (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: You were excessively emotionally dependent. It was like you figuratively found another mother's teat to nurse on and you weren't going to give it up. And that in a twenty-four year old

man, or should I say boy?

Dick: I acted as if I were a little kid. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: You didn't give her an inch. You wanted her to know that she crapped all over you, and she figured out that's what you wanted to say, but didn't have the guts to say it. So she left with a lousy opinion of you, wondering what she saw in you in the first place.

Dick: What can I say? I was awful petty towards her, and she didn't really deserve it. (Negative Self Assertion) So she found another guy whom she really got close to. That's life. She always acted pretty okay to me when we were going steady. I sure as hell didn't have anything to complain about. I should have been thankful to have had that relationship with her at all. I was a little shit. I am still ashamed. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: Why couldn't you have told her that, instead of the BS you handed her on the last time you met?

Dick: That's what one should do in a relationship breakup?

Me: Absolutely. That's the psychologically adult thing to do. Recognize what has happened, accept it and wish her the best of luck. She deserved it since she always treated you straight up and with care, didn't she?

Dick: You're right, she deserved better than what I gave her. (Fogging)

Me: Then replay that scene in the Art Quad as a practice for the next time you court someone and it doesn't work out to be permanent.

Dick: Okay. (Thinking out what to say.) I'll be me and you play Jean.

Me: Fine.

Dick: I walk over to Jean. I begin with: Hello, welcome back. Can we talk?

Jean: Sure.

Dick: Is everything okay with you?

Jean: Couldn't be better.

Dick: That's great. Also, congratulations. It really is good to find someone really special. I hope you will be very happy.

Jean: Are you okay?

Dick: Of course. Not that I won't miss you. But that's the kind of price you pay in life for anything important. I can take it. I think I was too emotionally dependent upon you. There's a

lesson I can learn from this. Don't substitute someone else for self actualization. It will get my priorities in touch with reality.

Jean: That makes me feel much better.

Dick: Good. I want you to be happy. You always had my best interests at heart when we were going steady. I value that and will always remember the good times and keep the feelings we had.

Me: Do you thank God for her; the time you had with her?

Dick: I should?

Me: It helps.

With that teaching dialog Dick learned an important lesson in being a psychological adult, especially in relationships. Dick learned that the pure romantic "I love you — you love me" view point is not in touch with reality. As a matter of fact, it is an impossible burden upon a relationship. Over ninety percent of who does what, what is the "right" thing to do, how do I make my mate "happy", has absolutely nothing to do with romance, but practicality. That which will kill a relationship sooner than anything else is excessive emotional dependency, i.e., "Because I love you, therefore you must..."

Another set of difficulties associated with breaking up a long term courting relationship is giving honest, yet supportive feedback to the one you are breaking up with. Many of us automatically behave according to the Environmental Law of Behavior without first thinking things through on our options. Unfortunately, some of us withdraw from the negatives using deceptive means, such as deciding to work up some real hate and anger towards our former courting partner — which we can easily do for anyone having our human faults. This of course, allows us to feel angry rather than anxious, sad or depressed — an easier path for us to take, yet not so for our courting partner. It is more painful in the short run to be honest about our true assessment of the breakup, yet more practical in the long run. Most of us have difficulty in giving feedback on the reason(s) for the breakup, particularly when having to cope with an impractical marriage suggestion or actual proposal. In turning down such a proposal, we mistakenly focus on problems we see with the love aspect of the relationship, while ignoring the real reasons we should never tie such a hitch; the practical problems in living with this particular person. We rarely, if ever, come right out and say something like, "Harry (or Harriet), I don't think you and I getting together permanently is a practical proposition. It would be great fun for a while, but I think we would soon exhaust each

other with the practical difficulties like ..." Such feedback is not hurtful and avoids dealing with very subjective emotional issues that can realistically be summed up as romantic nonsense that needn't be dealt with any way.

Now, let's turn to a related chapter, wherein we can look at Learning To Live With Dragons by becoming a psychological adult in close social sexual relationships as well as in sexual situations themselves.

Chapter Eight

Learn To Live With Dragons As A Psychological Adult In Close Relationships And Sexual Pairs

*Much is disguised as love, lust, avarice, power
But most of all, ambition*
Anon

Getting married is one way to ruin a perfectly good sex life

Joseph Sidowski
Environmental Psychologist

A few years ago, George Albee, a past president of the American Psychological Association, in delivering an invited address to the members of the APA, tallied up the significant practical contributions given to the American public, and indeed the world, by the discipline of psychology. He got involved in that accounting because at the time, organized psychology was questioning its future, or the worth of what it had to offer as the result of what it did every day. An answer proposed by some APA members to this question was that psychology should reorient itself so as to give away what it developed to the general public. In his talk, Dr. Albee reminded psychologists that in science, things worth giving away could not be ordered up when you felt a need, like pizza with mushrooms and anchovies. Psychology had developed, over the past 100 years, Dr. Albee reckoned, only about a half dozen practical contributions to the public well being, i.e., something which the average person could use him or herself. The two of them coming most readily to his mind were marital education and assertiveness training. With respect to the latter, George Albee was referring to the material presented in *When I Say No, I Feel Guilty*.

The two useful developments able to be given away by psychology cited by George Albee are the subject of this chapter. Let's look at why we need to look at both of them together.

1) We want to look at close or marital relationship material to improve things for ourselves, by ourselves. However, what is needed before there can be any intellectual, educative gain for the learner in a troubled, close

relationship is the chilling down of emotionally charged environmental and personal negatives causing psychological problems associated with that close relationship.

2) This is done using the abstract verbal desensitization methods first developed for assertiveness training, which we now can use to teach a learner how to deal successfully with those emotional negatives, which have destroyed marriages and relationships.

3) Once this emotional desensitization has been accomplished, allowing the partners to eliminate the reinforcement of destructive relationship behavior, we can look at and understand the concept of preventative maintenance for close relationships as specified by the fifth Environmental Sub-Law of Psychology, the Law of Groups.

There are three common, destructive, emotional/behavioral patterns in close relationships causing negatives, which must be rectified to allow either partner to participate rather than withdraw and eventually waste the positive payoffs of that relationship.

The first common behavior pattern is a ploy on the part of one of the partners to assume the expert role on what is a relationship, marriage, living together, etc. The other partner is then controlled through this supposed "expertise."

The second common behavior pattern is the compulsive desire of one or both partners to win any conflict at any cost. This is done by putting the other partner down to the point of destroying the relationship, rather than dealing with the issue under discussion. This is done, typically, by attacking one's partner where self confidence is lacking; where the partner has a psychological "sore spot" that he or she has trouble coping with.

The third behavior pattern is the bad habit of using cheap shots; such as attacking one's partner through the strange, odd, kooky, obnoxious, thoughtless, stupid or embarrassing behavior of his or her relatives; something which the partner has no control over. All three behavior patterns, unfortunately, can be seen in the same marriage or relationship.

To trace the etiology of a psychological problem here, we first have to look at the environmental change that causes it. In the close relationship situation, we don't see things like put downs or cheap shots during the courting phase, but for most of us these do not occur until after the courting phase of a relationship is over, typically a short time before or after the marriage ceremony. So the unpredictable change in the environment is the change in one's partner's behavior toward the other.

The malfunctioning belief is the expectation that someone whom you love and care for would not go to such lengths to win an argument and/or to try to establish some type of "moral" superiority and expertise over the other by attacking him or herself, or his or her less than perfect relatives.

The environmental negatives are obvious. One's partner brings them to the fore each time there is a disagreement or discussion. As we shall see in more detail in a later chapter, perfectly normal people routinely attack their mates and others with whom they disagree using the first principle of propaganda as stated by Dr. Paul Joseph Goebbels, the Nazi Minister of Propaganda of Germany in the 1930's and 40's: If you can't attack the principle which the person presents, attack the person.

The personal negatives in this particular type of psychological problem are unique. When you live with someone, you find out all about him or her, including all the personal faults that person has. In clinical psychology slang, the most painful of these faults are called "sore spots." The person with them knows about them but has no defense for them. As my old friend and colleague, Dr. George Bach, author of *The Intimate Enemy*, put it, attacking these sore spots is "hitting below the belt." If you were to bring these faults up in an unsupportive way, that person would either withdraw or get aggressive, and perhaps counterattack with respect to the accuser's sore spots.

The denial/withdrawal phase of the etiology of a psychological problem in these cases are typified by verbal withdrawal. In discussing anything, the female partner will usually get only grunts, umhumms, yeses and noes in any attempt to interact. The male partner will get physical withdrawal, usually to another room with the door left open so he can hear his partner crying.

You may be asking yourself, "What's the big deal here?" After all, you can just tell your partner that winning at all costs is self defeating, as well as picking on one partner because of his or her relatives. If only living with someone was that simple. If that were true, we could simply submit requests regularly each Tuesday to our mates and they to us, and everything would turn out just super. The fact of the matter is that partners put each other down because they get a payoff for it within their particular relationship environment, and not necessarily in any other relationship environment. They do it there because they win. They don't do it elsewhere because they would lose. Partners use each other's imperfect relatives to pick on each other because they also get a payoff for it in their relationship environment. This is truly a case where talk is cheap

and action counts. If you want to change your partner's bad habits towards you, simply take away your behavior which reinforces or gives a payoff for your partner's bad habits — restrict your payoff environment by taking away some specific positive reinforcements, instead of generally restricting it by withdrawing from it. Remember the discussion previously on the section about brainwashing — to control someone's behavior, simply restrict the environment and control the payoffs. When you do this your partner no longer wins. Typically, you will see a change in how your partner interacts with you in disagreements within days or weeks, rather than months or even years of talking about the problem as we see people do on the therapy couch. While we humans may be messy things, the one thing we are not is behaviorally inefficient. When the payoff changes, so does our behavior.

But even if you wanted to talk about the problem with your partner, you would have to bring yourself back within the relationship space. You would have to begin again to meaningfully interact with your partner, rather than just grunt or ignore him or her or begin to cry when the subject on which you might be criticized comes up. So, in using Fogel's and/or Negative Self Assertion to deal with this psychological problem, you are working upon two goals simultaneously; 1) desensitizing yourself to any relationship or personal negative which your partner might bring on you — Defang The Dragon — which allows you to remain within the relationship environment and work out problems — Learn To Live With Dragons. 2) At the same time, eliminating any possible payoff, which your partner might get for picking on you or putting you down. If you have no emotional reaction to personal or relationship negatives, your partner is not likely to be reinforced in using them on you because there is no point in so doing.

Psychological Problem Type IV:

Irrational emotional self-assessment in dealing with unpredictable negatives from close partners during conflict as well as in sexual situations.

Becoming a psychological adult in a close relationship by extinguishing its environmental and personal negatives

Now let's look at how to deal with some negative situations in close relationships using the following therapy dialogs. Just as those we looked at before, these dialogs are composites of the experiences of many learners and are edited for confidentiality, brevity, interest and teaching.

purposes.*

Jeff, a young man of twenty-four, lived with his fiancée, Sarah, for six months when she asked that they see a therapist for couples counseling. Jeff agreed. Sarah ran the show at home and even tried to run the first counseling session. When I asked her why they needed counseling Sarah said that Jeff was withdrawing from her, they hardly ever talked any more, and all she could get out of him was grunts, uhuhs, umhums, yeses, noes, and maybes. She said that maybe was becoming his favorite response to anything she asked or said. Their relationship was in trouble, she said. When I asked why, she said that Jeff was not the person he was six months ago when they decided to live together.

I asked Jeff why he thought counseling was necessary and Sarah answered for him with "He doesn't love me anymore." With that, I bluntly told her that if she behaved the same way at home, no wonder he doesn't say much. He would have to compete with her to slip a word in here and there. Then I asked her a question that was very important to answer. Did she think that she was only allowing him to say the things she wanted to hear, otherwise he would get in trouble with her? She immediately denied this possibility, so I asked Jeff the original question about counseling. Sarah started to answer for him again and I pointed out that it was couples counseling they were asking for, not Sarah counseling, so would she please let Jeff answer the question.

Jeff responded with an observation that their relationship contained a large number of negatives and he hoped that counseling would help straighten it out so it would be workable. He said that he was beginning to think that the relationship was now not workable, at least for him, and some change in how they dealt with each other was necessary. Sarah, at this point began to argue with Jeff and make statements of blame for the problem, i.e., if he would shape up, there wouldn't be a problem. Letting her run for a while to see what she did, it became quite apparent that she did try to control Jeff completely. Her argument was she was the expert on relationships and marriage and knew how it should be run. Her aim was to convince Jeff he knew little or nothing about their relationship and

* Footnote

The how-to-do-it, self-help model of the five etiological steps that can be used to describe your own psychological problem can be found in the Appendices at the end of the book (see Appendix A.) After filling out the description of your psychological problem, this information can be used to organize the practice list of environmental and personal negatives you will use to resolve your problem (see Appendix B.)

living together. She hadn't yet convinced Jeff of this, but he did not fight back. Jeff during conflict did nothing but put his hands over his eyes and ignore her.

Becoming a psychological adult in dealing with your partner in a close relationship

At this point the three of us took part in the following exploratory and teaching dialogs.

Verbal Behavior Therapy Dialogs 22A through 22C. Finding where the negatives are and then extinguishing them.

Exploratory Therapy Dialog 22A. Finding out what was wrong with Sarah's and Jeff's relationship.

- Me: I'm not here to tell you one of you is wrong and the other is right. Counseling doesn't work that way. All I can do is to help you to communicate how you really feel and help you see if the communication is not working, and perhaps why. Okay?
- Jeff: Okay.
- Sarah: Okay.
- Me: Jeff, can you tell me specifically what you think is wrong in your relationship with Sarah?
- Jeff: She's a bitch.
- Sarah: That's not true. You don't care, otherwise you wouldn't do the things you do.
- Me: One at a time, please. Okay? Jeff, what do you mean, she's a bitch. I don't know what that means.
- Jeff: Sarah's always picking on me. For nothing. If I say it looks like a nice day, she has to express her opinion by putting me down.
- Sarah: You're just distorting things so you look better. I never do that.
- Me: Please, Sarah, cool it for a bit. You seem incapable of letting Jeff get things off his chest.
- Sarah: But what he's saying is not true.
- Me: I asked him what he thought. He shouldn't tell me that?
- Sarah: Not if it's untrue.
- Me: And you decide if it's untrue?
- Sarah: I know what's true and not.

- Me: And if you decide something's untrue, Jeff can't say what he feels?
- Sarah: You're not fair. You're saying he's right and I'm wrong.
- Me: I just started out two minutes ago telling you both that I'm not here to say one is wrong and the other is right. All I can do is work on your communications with each other. A major part of communications is letting your partner say what he or she feels, don't you think?
- Sarah: (No response)
- Me: Sarah?
- Sarah: I guess.
- Me: Is that an okay to continue?
- Sarah: I still think you are favoring him, but okay.
- Me: Why don't we just be patient and see where this gets us?
- Sarah: Okay.
- Me: Jeff, what do you mean by Sarah puts you down if you disagree?
- Jeff: I really think that she holds me in contempt. She is really pissed at me deep down inside, but I don't know why. I think this is why she says things that really upset me.
- Me: Like?
- Jeff: Like I don't care about us because I bought a fishing pole for twenty dollars for myself, instead of saving the money to buy things for both of us. When she criticized me for being selfish in buying things for myself, I really felt bad about it. I knew I shouldn't be selfish, but...
- Me: Sarah, clarify this for me. What would be things for both of you?
- Sarah: I've been saving money for a new hutch so we could store our china dinnerware.
- Me: Please give me some other examples of things that are for the both of you.
- Sarah: Well the chinaware, and the silver ware. They were for us.
- Me: What else?
- Sarah: The new dining room table and chairs.
- Me: Expensive?
- Sarah: Very.
- Me: Anything else?
- Sarah: The lace trimmed comforters for the beds. We both sleep there.

- Me: Do you know how Jeff feels about those things?
- Sarah: He should be proud of them.
- Me: Shall we find out?
- Sarah: Okay.
- Me: Jeff, how do you feel about the hutch to display the china and silverware?
- Jeff: Got nothing to do with me. I eat with a stainless steel fork we bought from Pick 'n Save.
- Me: How about the china?
- Jeff: Nice, but It doesn't do anything for me. I could care less what I eat off. Pier One plates are okay. That doesn't bother me at all. I've only eaten off the good china in the dining room when Sarah's mother came to dinner.
- Me: How do you feel about the new dining room set?
- Jeff: We eat mostly off the kitchenette table and have dinner in the living room watching the tube.
- Me: So how do you feel about this "us" thing that Sarah says you both have going?
- Jeff: Her "us" has nothing to do with me. All that stuff is hers. It doesn't mean much to me. If we didn't have it, I wouldn't get upset, but she would.
- Me: Sarah, Jeff just gave you some feedback. Any reaction.
- Sarah: I think that's very selfish of him.
- Me: Explain please.
- Sarah: I slave to earn the money for us and he doesn't appreciate it.
- Me: I think he was saying it was not for us — both of you — but things for you, and they had very little to do with him. I didn't hear him say that you should not get these things, but they were your thing — so to speak — and not his.
- Sarah: But they are for both of us.
- Me: I heard him say that they were your thing, not his, and he doesn't begrudge you them. They're just not his thing. He doesn't get excited about them.
- Sarah: But he should!
- Me: It sounds like you want a girl friend living with you instead of Jeff. Someone who would get excited about the same things you do. He gets excited about fishing. Is that wrong?
- Sarah: No. He can fish all he wants to.
- Me: But he can't buy a fishing pole for twenty dollars to fish with?

- Sarah: But that money could go towards things for both of us.
- Me: For the hutch you want?
- Sarah: It's not just for me.
- Me: He just told you it wasn't for him, and he doesn't begrudge you it. You are entitled to your thing, but if that's the case here, so is he.
- Sarah: I bought all that stuff for us.
- Me: Let's see what happens if Jeff justifies what he does in the same way as you do. Suppose Jeff came home one day with a dirt bike motorcycle and said it was for both of you. He had also gotten a sidecar so your mother could ride in it when she visited. What would you think of that? He said, "It's for us"; that he bought it for both of you.
- Sarah: I'd think he was out of his mind.
- Me: Why?
- Sarah: Because I would never ride in such a thing and neither would my mother.
- Me: Why not?
- Sarah: Because I would have absolutely no interest in it.
- Me: Sort of like the same way he has very little interest in your hutch?
- Sarah: We are supposed to like the same things.
- Me: Do you want him to be a clone of you?
- Sarah: Of course not.
- Me: Then he is going to have different interests than you.
- Sarah: I guess.
- Me: What if he demanded that you like fishing? Who is it with the authority to say who should like what?
- Sarah: With both those disgusting examples, I see your point.
- Me: Then shall we proceed?
- Sarah: Please.
- Me: Jeff, what else does Sarah critique you for?
- Jeff: She says I'm lazy because I should be more interested in repainting the apartment. It looks just fine to me in white. She wants it in pastels.
- Me: Anything else.
- Jeff: Lots. If I really cared, she wouldn't have to ask me to do things, like taking out the trash, if it's full. I realize I should take more interest in keeping the place tidy, but I don't like or need her to

harp on it.

Me: And?

Jeff: She keeps bugging me to ask my boss for a raise so we would have more money. That really hurts because I think I should be paid more myself.

Me: And?

Jeff: She says I should want to not look so much like a slob by dressing neater. I am not a handsome guy. Let's face it; Mel Gibson has nothing to worry about from me.

Me: And?

Jeff: She says I should try to make up for my looks by dressing better.

Me: What else?

Jeff: She says I don't care for her as much because I should want to take her out more often, or travel.

Me: And?

Jeff: I should be nicer to her mother when she visits. Then she complains to me about her mother when she's here.

Me: More?

Jeff: She turns into a bitch and attacks me without any warning about anything; Out of the blue, she starts criticizing me for putting the cleanser up on the windowsill above the sink to make room to cook dinner. She makes a real federal case out of little crap like that. Says I never listen to her. Other times she doesn't say anything about it. At times I do it just because she doesn't like it. Sometimes I think I'm going nuts or she is. I'm not perfect, but she acts like she is.

Me: It seems to me you could go on and on. You don't seem to be running out of things that Sarah critiques you for.

Jeff: Yeah. I'm getting fed up. I don't fight back. That's not my style. But I don't need this.

Me: Do you ever criticize Sarah?

Jeff: Only when I get really mad. Then I tell her to piss off. Most of the time I'm not that type of person. I don't get anything out of criticizing anyone else.

Me: Sarah, it seems that Jeff doesn't respond well to your critiques. What do you think about that?

Sarah: He shouldn't. He should be able to take them.

Me: Even if they're about things he feels bad about himself?

- Psychological sore spots, so to speak?
- Sarah: He should toughen himself up then.
- Me: You think that would be a worthwhile goal for Jeff to work on in counseling?
- Sarah: Sure.
- Me: That would mean that your critique wouldn't have much negative effect on him as it does now.
- Sarah: Anything would be better than what we have now.
- Me: I think that's an astute observation.
- Sarah: Thank you.
- Me: Jeff, what would you like to do? Do you want to be emotionally desensitized to Sarah's criticism of you?
- Jeff: Can it be done?
- Me: Like shooting fish in a barrel.
- Jeff: Okay.
- Me: Let me have a teaching session with Jeff, and when that's done its job, the three of us meet again to test it out. Agreed?
- Jeff: Yes.
- Sarah: Sure.

In the following dialog Jeff and I Defang The Dragon by desensitizing him to Sarah's criticism, both petty and real, as well as some of his own "sore spots."

Verbal Behavioral Therapy Dialog 22B.

Learning to deal with general put-downs from a relationship partner about personal faults "in the shallow end of the pool" by practicing with someone else.

- Me: You understand Fogging and Negative Self Assertion. You have had a lot of general practice dealing with all sorts of criticism of yourself. Your taste in clothes, your attitude, your morals, your work habits, etc. Now let's practice them with respect to your situation with Sarah. You are you and I'll role play Sarah.
- Jeff: Shoot.
- Me: You don't care about me the same way you did six months ago.
- Jeff: You're probably right. (Fogging)
- Me: You never listen to me any more.
- Jeff: I probably don't listen as much as I did.

- Me: Why don't you?
- Jeff: I don't know. (Self Disclosure)
- Me: You don't want to know.
- Jeff: I probably don't. (Fogging)
- Me: You are lazy. I can't get you interested in repainting the apartment.
- Jeff: You're right there. (Fogging)
- Me: You have no aesthetic taste. You think a white apartment is just fine. You have no appreciation for the better things in life, like fine pastels in an apartment.
- Jeff: You're certainly right there. I don't have taste worth a damn for painting that apartment in pastels. (Fogging)
- Me: And you don't change. You will never improve, will you?
- Jeff: I probably won't. (Fogging)
- Me: Things shouldn't be this way between us.
- Jeff: I couldn't agree with you more. (Fogging)
- Me: I always have to ask you to do things. If you did things without asking it would mean you cared.
- Jeff: That's true. (Fogging)
- Me: It's not fair. I do so much around here. You do as little as you possibly can.
- Jeff: That's true, you do an awful lot around here. (Fogging)
- Me: You dress like a slob. You don't care about how you look.
- Jeff: I certainly could look better. (Fogging)
- Me: You could make up for your lack of looks by at least dressing better.
- Jeff: Thank you for your kind thoughts, but I think I'm a lost cause in that area. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: You are selfish. Buying that fishing pole when we could have saved that money for things we both need, like a hutch for the china.
- Jeff: You're right, that was selfish of me buying the fishing pole.
- Me: You should demand a raise from your boss.
- Jeff: I should. (Fogging)
- Me: You deserve a raise.
- Jeff: I do. (Fogging)
- Me: You don't ask for one because you are gutless.
- Jeff: That certainly is true. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: Why don't you shape up?

- Jeff: I should shape up more, shouldn't I?
- Me: I think you couldn't if you tried.
- Jeff: You probably right. (Fogging)
- Me: I don't think you could if your life depended on it.
- Jeff: Again, I think you're right. (Fogging)
- Me: You are a dead loss.
- Jeff: Now you're cooking. Sometimes I think so myself. (Fogging)
- Me: I hate to tell you this, it is such a sensitive subject, but you definitely need to improve what you do in bed.
- Jeff: I'm sure I do. (Fogging) Could you elaborate?
- Me: I'd be delighted. There must be some books you could read with pictures in case you didn't understand the text. Like *The Joy of Sex* maybe?
- Jeff: I certainly could brush up what I do — get some information from books, especially from those with pictures, so I wouldn't misunderstand it. (Fogging plus Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: I think you would need to do more than just brush up.
- Jeff: You're probably right about that. (Fogging)
- Me: You are pretty crude in bed. Very little finesse.
- Jeff: I'm sure I could use more finesse. (Fogging) Can I get some of that where they sell the condoms in the drug store?
- Me: Very cute. I'm trying to help you better yourself in bed and you make jokes.
- Jeff: You're right. I should take this more seriously. (Fogging)
- Me: No wonder you sometimes can't perform in bed.
- Jeff: Yes, with my less than serious attitude, it's a wonder I make things work in bed at all. (Fogging)
- Me: How do you think I feel when that happens. Like it's my fault, but it's all your fault for not doing things seriously, like you are supposed to
- Jeff: You're absolutely right. When things go wrong, it's probably my fault. (Fogging)
- Me: Well, it's your thing, not mine, so it has to be your fault.
- Jeff: You're right, it is my thing, (Fogging). But sometimes I forget, and think it belongs to you. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: You treat what I tell you as if it is unimportant.
- Jeff: You are right. I am guilty of that. And I feel bad that I do that to you. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: You think I'm a bitch and don't care for you.

- Jeff: You're right. Sometimes I think you're a bitch who acts like she doesn't care for me. (Fogging)
- Me: You don't care for me.
- Jeff: You're right. Sometimes when I think you are bitchy, I really don't care for you, or what you do. (Fogging)
- Me: I always care for you.
- Jeff: I'm sure you feel that way. (Fogging)
- Me: You don't take what I say to you in the right way. I'm just trying to make things better.
- Jeff: Again, I'm sure you feel that way and you're trying to make things better from your viewpoint. (Fogging)
- Me: You seem to have everything under control. Am I right?
- Jeff: Looks like it.
- Me: Then let's try it with Sarah.
- Jeff: One question.
- Me: Yes.
- Jeff: Why did you bring in criticism of my sexual performance? Sarah never criticized that.
- Me: What if she does?
- Jeff: Be prepared?
- Me: Boy Scout motto applies to everything.

Let's now look at Jeff dealing with the same real life negatives from Sarah, and what his response — or lack of — is to his relationship environment. The three of us met again, but this time with Sarah's pistol loaded with blanks.

Verbal Behavior Therapy Dialog 22C.

Learning to deal with put downs from a relationship partner about personal faults in a very realistic way by getting that partner to criticize you.

- Jeff: Take your best shot.
- Sarah: Oh. You seem pretty confident.
- Jeff: You're right, I am. (Fogging)
- Sarah: You weren't very confident after the first session.
- Jeff: That's true. I wasn't. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Sarah: You think you are different now?
- Jeff: I certainly hope so. (Fogging)
- Sarah: I doubt it. You always waffle in talking to me. Your favorite

word is "maybe."

Jeff: I sure seem like that, don't I? (Fogging)

Sarah: It's frustrating even trying to make pleasant conversation with you.

Jeff: I'm sure I frustrated you a lot. I feel bad about that. (Negative Self Assertion)

Sarah: You don't look like you're sorry.

Jeff: I'm sure I don't. (Fogging) But I do feel bad about it. (Self Disclosure)

Sarah: You still have poor aesthetic taste in colors for an apartment.

Jeff: I know I do, positively. (Negative Self Assertion)

Sarah: Aren't you going to do something about it?

Jeff: My poor aesthetic taste?

Sarah: Yes.

Jeff: I probably should do something about it. (Fogging)

Sarah: Can I convince you to repaint the apartment?

Jeff: Why don't you make that your next project to save money for after you get your hutch?

Sarah: You are stubborn.

Jeff: I guess I am. (Fogging)

Sarah: You are still dressed like a slob.

Jeff: That's for sure. (Fogging)

Sarah: No one can talk to you and get some sense into your head.

Jeff: I'm sure that's true. (Negative Self Assertion)

Sarah: You are still selfish. This doesn't change that.

Jeff: Again you hit the nail on the head. (Negative Self Assertion)

Sarah: You still are a gutless wonder at work.

Jeff: You're right. I am. (Negative Self Assertion)

Sarah: All you need to do is go up to your boss and demand a raise.

Jeff: I probably could do that. (Fogging)

Sarah: Why don't you?

Jeff: I should, really. (Fogging)

Sarah: You won't though.

Jeff: You're probably right. (Fogging)

Sarah: Why can't you do some things for me without me having to ask you to do them?

Jeff: Sure, be glad to. What do you want me to do?

Sarah: That's what I'm talking about, right there.

Jeff: If I don't know what you want, I don't know what to do.

Sarah: If you really loved me, you would know.

Jeff: I guess you're right. If I loved you that much, I probably would know how to read minds. (Fogging) I doubt if I would love anybody that much. (Negative Self Assertion)

Sarah: That's a horrible thing to say.

Jeff: I'm sure you don't like it. (Fogging) But it is reality, or at least my reality.

Sarah: You probably would go out and buy a dirt bike and say it was for the both of us.

Jeff: Now that you mention it, that seems like a nifty idea. I probably would. (Fogging)

Sarah: You still don't take me out enough.

Jeff: You're right. I probably don't. (Fogging)

Sarah: You should.

Jeff: You're right. I know I should. (Negative Self Assertion)

Sarah: When are you going to?

Jeff: Take you out, begin to take you out more, or take you out enough?

Sarah: You always used words to your advantage to always win any argument we had.

Jeff: I guess I did. (Fogging) But unless you pushed, I would always avoid an argument or a fight. Maybe I should have let the chips fall where they may. (Negative Self Assertion)

Sarah: You don't like my mother.

Jeff: You're right there. I probably like her about as much as you do. (Fogging) But I don't feel guilty about it.

Sarah: That's a rotten thing to say to me.

Jeff: You're right. It was not nice. (Negative Self Assertion)

Sarah: You shouldn't have said something like that.

Jeff: I agree. It was rotten. (Negative Self Assertion)

Sarah: You should feel really bad for saying that.

Jeff: I do. It was a cheap shot that makes me feel ashamed I could be that petty towards you. (Negative Self Assertion)

Sarah: You're saying that because criticism doesn't bother you now.

Jeff: You're right. (Fogging) Once I wasn't bothered by your crap anymore, I could admit to when I treated you in a shabby way. (Negative Self Assertion)

Sarah: I don't know if I like this or not. (thinking a moment) Yes I do like it. At least now you are talking to me instead of ignoring

me.

Jeff: Me too. (Self Disclosure)

Again, the purpose of this sequence of teaching dialogs was to eliminate Jeff's problem with Sarah, which produced withdrawal, which produced more criticism, which produced more withdrawal. It is important to note that although we are using verbal skills originally designed to teach someone how to be assertive and cope with emotional manipulation, their purpose here is simply to get the person with the identified problem to stop psychologically withdrawing from the environmental and personal negatives delivered by his or her mate. Once they are again interacting with the previously hurt party wrapped in a protective psychological shield against negatives, each can Learn To Live With Dragons by giving as well as they get in working out the day by day problems of staying in a close relationship. Now let's move to another problem area in close relationships, sexual dysfunction.

The three models of sexual dysfunction or difficulty: The anxiety model, the anger model, and the mixed anxiety/anger model.

There are three ways you can get into sexual trouble, through anxiety, through anger, or a combination of both. The anxiety model of sexual dysfunction explains and predicts what can be done to remedy a number of sexual problems, including male impotence, and premature ejaculation, female lack of orgasm and dyspareunia (involuntary vaginal sphincter contractions.) The anxiety model of sexual treatment assumes, and this assumption is backed up by a wealth of empirical treatment data, that learned or conditioned anxiety about sex or some aspect of sex is the cause of the above sexual difficulties. The standard behavioral desensitization treatment of anxiety — start in the shallow end of the pool and eliminate fear of water and swimming by gradually moving into the deep end — has been demonstrated to be very successful in counter conditioning first low anxiety, and then high anxiety associated with sex that causes lack or loss of erection, premature ejaculation, lack of orgasm, as well as involuntary vaginal sphincter constriction.

The anxiety based sexual dysfunctions all begin with a gradual diminution of sexual function then increasing to total lack of sexual function, first with one partner, and then to all possible sexual partners. Clinical

histories show that in some cases, anxiety conditioning is actually done in the bedroom situation itself by an unempathic sexual partner.

The anger model of sexual dysfunction, on the other hand, produces only one negative result, total indifference to sexual arousal with one specific partner. The anger model usually has little to do with conditioning in the bedroom, but is a result of environmental and personal negatives intruding upon intimate, close situations in other everyday aspects of relationship life. Here, partner (1) puts the other down, adopts a winning at all costs philosophy, and deliberately tries to hurt partner (2) through picking on psychological "sore spots," or other negative aspects of personal life over which partner (2) has no control, such as questionable in-law behaviors, etc. The most common reaction of partner (2) who is attacked in this manner is anger. If that person is one who does not express anger, but tends to hold it within, a grudge against the attacking partner (1) is typically created. After a number of these attacks, a number of grudges are held against partner (1) by partner (2). In this way, attacking partner (1) creates a psychological problem for partner (2) about any and all intimate communication, including sexual communication, for his or her mate. As with any psychological problem, the end result is either Remove The Dragon, usually by divorce or separation, or Remove Yourself by withdrawal from the intimate environment of the relationship, including the sexual environment.

The treatment of anger caused sexual difficulties is not as sophisticated as with the anxiety based dysfunctions. The typical treatment is conjoint therapy where the partners talk about the problem. The success rate is marginal, depending upon how long one partner has been attacking the other. The most difficult of the sexual dysfunction models is the mixed or anxiety/anger model. Bill Masters and Virginia Johnson, the famous sex therapists noted that the anxiety deconditioning procedures have a low probability of working with unresolved anger or grudges between the partners.

The treatment of anxiety based sexual dysfunctions is efficient, fast and workable. Because it is so efficient and has such a high probability of success in treating clients, I have never had to use abstract verbal desensitization to overcome their personal sexual negatives. Those things self-correct when sexual performance is again within a normal range. Here, we will use the verbal desensitization skills for working within the anger model of sexual dysfunction to inure one partner with grudges to the environmental and personal negatives revealed by the other, a Defang

The Dragon strategy for correcting the dysfunctional relationship.

Coping with environmental and personal negatives in an anger model, sexual environment withdrawal situation

Jill is a young woman in her mid twenties who recently graduated from college. She married Mort in her last year of college and both worked to support each other so they could graduate together. Her presenting problem was sexual difficulties. As we shall see, her sexual problem was directly related to her interactions outside the bed with her husband Mort during marital conflict on subjects ranging from who should take out the garbage, to chores around the apartment, to entertaining, to politics. Jill was a gentle person. It was harder for her to call Mort on the carpet for being verbally abusive to her than it was to silently accept his canards and slights. Mort, it seemed, had a problem with losing any arguments with Jill. To win, he would use the Nazi technique of putting her down instead of successfully arguing the point in question. Jill's psychological problem, or anyone's in a similar close relationship situation, can be analyzed as follows:

- 1) The environmental change was Mort's unpredictable change in behavior after they were married whenever they had a conflict.
- 2) Jill had a malfunctioning belief, which said that if you loved someone, you did not attack him or her, but showed that love in a variety of positive ways.
- 3) The environmental negatives uncovered by the change in the relationship environment were Mort's immature tendencies to attack someone who was basically on his side in about everything, as well as placing no limits upon what he could say to his relationship partner. He often showed contempt for her when she did not behave as he wished, disagreed with him, or just because he was in a bad mood about something else.
- 4) The personal negatives uncovered were those faults and sore spots of Jill, which Mort kept attacking by "hitting below the belt."
- 5) Jill at first denied that there was a problem with her intimate interactions with Mort, such as conflicts, disagreements and fights. When this denial no longer worked, she withdrew from him in all intimate areas, including sex. Given this fit of her difficulties to the etiology of a psychological problem, it was clear what needed to be done; to desensitize Jill to Mort's negatives as well as to eliminate her negative emotional reaction

to her own personal faults and sore spots; a need to Defang The Dragon.

Given that rationale for what I am going to teach you in becoming a psychological adult in close relationships, let's look at a dialog which covers first, personal attacks on ones faults which cause great pain and embarrassment, and then personal attacks upon something you have absolutely no control over; the behavior and negative points of your relatives. As before, this dialog is a compilation of the experiences of many learners, edited for confidentiality, teaching purposes, interest, and brevity.*

Verbal Behavior Therapy Dialog 23.

Becoming a psychological adult towards a relationship partner or a mate who causes anger based withdrawal from intimate areas such as sex.

Me: You know why we are doing this?

Jill: Yes, to get rid of my negative reactions to fighting with Mort.

Me: Plus your own negative reactions to your own psychological sore spots and faults.

Jill: Yup.

Me: These sore spots do not have to make sense to a rational person. It's sort of to each his own. Do you understand that?

Jill: Exactamento.

Me: Oooh. Is that the latest way to sound cool? (Learners are instructed to treat all questions as a negative statement.)

Jill: Yup. I certainly try to sound cool. (Fogging)

Me: Perhaps at the expense of your own humanity and human effectiveness in relationships?

Jill: I never thought of it that way. Maybe. (Fogging)

Me: It makes you sound like a dumb ass kid in college or high school. Trying to be like everyone else when there is basically nothing wrong with the way you are.

Jill: It probably does. (Fogging)

Me: You don't like yourself.

* Footnote

The how-to-do-it, self-help model of the five etiological steps that can be used to describe your own psychological problem can be found in the Appendices at the end of the book (see Appendix A.) After filling out the description of your psychological problem, this information can be used to organize the practice list of environmental and personal negatives you will use to resolve your problem (see Appendix B.)

- Jill: Maybe. (Fogging)
- Me: Maybe! What is this BS you are trying to feed me? You want to look good to someone who knows how screwed up you really are? What's the point? I'm trying to get you out of the pile of crap you fell in and you're worried about looking good?
- Jill: (Looking thoughtful) Ummm... That really makes me look and feel dumb; someone who belongs in that pile. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: You have to look good to other people?
- Jill: I guess... (Fogging)
- Me: Don't guess. Tell me.
- Jill: It's correct. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: You want others to be the judge of yourself?
- Jill: Again, I guess so... I don't know how much. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: You had better look at yourself and make a decision or you will just sit on your butt and do nothing.
- Jill: It's embarrassing to say so, but I guess you are right. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: Excuse me, but what is wrong with just saying "Yes, that describes me," or "You are right," or "Sounds good to me, or even "A okay" as a simple response?
- Jill: I guess I should. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: Listen to yourself. Everything is tentative. You can't take responsibility for your own faults and negatives can you? Do you think someone from the Psych police is going to come around and beat you up and arrest you?
- Jill: This is hard for me. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: No shit, Sherlock. If it were easy, everybody would have done it already. It's simple but not easy.
- Jill: You keep picking on me.
- Me: Did you just figure that out? You must be a real rocket scientist. That's what I'm supposed to do, pick on you. To keep presenting negatives to you for practice in becoming inured to them. Real negatives, not BS ones. And that's what you are getting. That's my job. What's yours?
- Jill: To use Fogging and Negative Self Assertion to get rid of my negative reactions.
- Me: So have we gotten anywhere yet?

Jill: I Fog, but I don't believe it yet.

Me: Do you know why?

Jill: Probably because I keep interrupting and haven't practiced enough?

Me: You are smart.

Jill: You are probably right. (Fogging) You weren't going to catch me on that.

Me: Well maybe another time.

Jill: (Sarcastically) Don't hold your breath.

Me: No wonder you are in trouble. You stay on top of things for about five seconds and then you screw up again. Fogging would have been a better response than sarcasm.

Jill: Oh... I should have said maybe you would catch me another time. (Fogging)

Me: Correctamundo, as you would say.

Jill: Do you think I'm dumb?

Me: What I think is irrelevant. What you think is everything. You think you are a gutless wonder with Mort or anybody else.

Jill: I can tell you that's true, but I wouldn't want everyone to know that. (Fogging)

Me: Why not? I don't try to hide my golf game.

Jill: That's not the same. This is really important.

Me: You don't know golf.

Jill: I'm serious.

Me: So am I. You should be able to tell anyone that you are not perfect and have troubles.

Jill: You are probably right. (Fogging) But I don't know how.

Me: You keep doing just what you are doing now — accepting criticism about your faults and sore spots until your emotional reaction is zero. Then you can deal with Mort and teach him how to be a psychological adult, or dump him if he wants to remain a child.

Jill: That's a big order.

Me: You may be right. (Fogging) So, can we get on with it?

Jill: Okay.

Me: You are too much of a wimp.

Jill: I think you may be right. (Fogging)

Me: You want everything to be nice. You can't stand any conflict.

Jill: That's for sure. I have too little tolerance for conflict. (Negative

Self Assertion)

Me: You were probably fed a line of BS as a kid and you bought into it. Like you always have to be nice. Love will conquer all, etc., and other pukey slogans on which to base your life with other people.

Jill: You're probably right. I think I was fed a line of crap and bought it because it sounded nice. (Fogging)

Me: Mort wouldn't be critical of you if you blasted him with both barrels the first time he tried to intimidate you by picking on your sore spots; the places where you know yourself to be at fault.

Jill: That's not my style.

Me: How long are we going to keep getting denial and rationalizations instead of the practice of Fogging from you?

Jill: Sorry, I just automatically protest these things.

Me: You only protest things which you know are true and describe your faults.

Jill: You're probably right. (Fogging)

Me: Did you accept that Fogging response as an accurate statement instead of just something you are practicing, no matter what?

Jill: Yes, it was accurate, high probability of being right, and I should have been doing that all along.

Me: As Professor Higgins said, "By Jove, I think she's got it."

Jill: You're probably right, I think I got it too. (Fogging)

Me: You can't take criticism.

Jill: That's the truth. (Fogging)

Me: You cringe inside when that happens.

Jill: I know it. (Fogging)

Me: That's silly of you. Like a little girl instead of an adult.

Jill: That embarrasses me because it's true. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: Who's in charge here, you or me.

Jill: You.

Me: That was a dumb ass response, which characterizes your whole perception of yourself. I'm only a technical expert from whom you're getting assistance. I'm not in charge of you.

Jill: I should understand, but I don't. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: If you want to get up and leave, can I stop you?

Jill: No.

Me: If you want to tell me to take my negatives and shove them, can you?

- Jill: Yes.
- Me: But you have this perception still that I'm in charge.
- Jill: Yes, dumb as it seems, I do. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: Perhaps you feel that way towards many people besides me, including Mort?
- Jill: Yes, that's exactly how I feel.
- Me: If you let Mort be in charge, he will be.
- Jill: I think you're right. That's what I do without realizing it. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: Let me give you an analogy. Mort has a psychological revolver pointed at you with emotional bullets that cause you real pain. I want to take out the bullets and replace them with blanks by you practicing Fogging until you have no emotional reaction to his bullets. Okay?
- Jill: That fine with me. I'd like that.
- Me: I will use a wide approach and make up negatives if I have to. You still use Fogging and Negative Self Assertion.
- Jill: Okay with me. Shoot, to coin a pun.
- Me: You will pay for that. The first thing I noticed about you is that you fold under pressure.
- Jill: You're right. I think I do that too. (Fogging)
- Me: Mort says the littlest thing, and you crumple inside.
- Jill: You're right. (Fogging)
- Me: You can't deal with your faults, even little ones that are not important, like making a mistake.
- Jill: That really bothers me to make a mistake. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: You think you have to be perfect.
- Jill: I do. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: That's silly because no one else gives a damn if you are perfect or not.
- Jill: I know. But I shake inside when any one finds I made a mistake. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: And you deny it.
- Jill: You're right (Fogging)
- Me: And then you pooh-pooh its importance.
- Jill: You're right about that too. (Fogging)
- Me: And if that doesn't work, you either get into a fight with Mort or withdraw crying.

- Jill: That's true. I do that a lot. (Fogging)
- Me: And later, you start to pick on Mort for revenge. Very indirectly. Bang pots and pans, slam doors, etc. To make him feel as bad as you did.
- Jill: That's exactly what I do. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: Quite a childish way to interact, don't you think?
- Jill: This is really embarrassing. To admit you think and behave like a child. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: You also try to bluff your way out of things; pretending to know something well when you really don't. When Mort calls you on something like this you get anxious and then really furious with him.
- Jill: You are right on the ball about that. Getting caught in pretending. (Negative Self Assertion) Nothing more embarrassing.
- Me: Also, to let Mort do this to you. To not have the personal integrity to stop it dead in its tracks. That must really hurt when you think about it.
- Jill: It makes me want to cry. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: That brings up something else. You seem to prefer being 100 percent female rather than part female and part person.
- Jill: What do you mean?
- Me: 100 percent female is the corollary to 100 percent macho in males.
- Jill: Tell me more.
- Me: The person part of ourselves has nothing to do with male or female. It's the part that can do anything that a male or female can do. Be a doctor, a business person, run for the senate, mow a lawn, take out the trash, reupholster a chair, sew on a loose button, broil a steak, sail a boat. Comprene?
- Jill: Yes, and you see me as being 100 percent female?
- Me: Yes, including playing the helpless, seductive role that females who only have the 100 percent female option must play.
- Jill: You're probably right, I do that sometimes. (Fogging) Is that wrong?
- Me: It's not wrong, just juvenile. Don't you have something more adult to do than that, like mow the lawn, or sail a boat, or run for the senate?
- Jill: I guess I should have. (Fogging)
- Me: No wonder Mort is able to pick on you so easily. You give him

all the ammunition he could ever need. Just play the traditional, total female whenever he's around.

Jill: I probably do. (Fogging)

Me: You probably think you are clever when you do it.

Jill: You're right, I do think I'm clever when I do that. (Fogging)

Me: Speaking as a neutral observer, I think you would look dumb if you do that all the time. It's game playing, and not hard for anybody to see right through. You have said Mort is many things, but you haven't said he is dumb.

Jill: You're right, I don't think that he's dumb. (Fogging)

Me: You are much like your mother.

Jill: Why do you say that?

Me: You told me that you are both bitchy, but she is a master of it.

Jill: You're right, she is, and I am like her in that aspect. (Fogging)

Me: You also don't like your father.

Jill: You're right. I don't like a lot of the things he does. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: That's a poor attitude for a daughter to have about her father, even if he drinks to excess.

Jill: You're right. It is a poor attitude, and he does drink a lot. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: Your brother seems to be a jerk. No wonder Mort doesn't want to have him visit anymore.

Jill: You may be right. I don't feel good about how he does things. He may be taking drugs. (Fogging)

Me: I thought that was your cousin, Mary. The one you like.

Jill: She really upsets me because I like her so much. You're right. I think she and my brother get together to get high. (Fogging) God knows what they do when they're stoned.

Me: Haven't you told either of them to clean up their act and grow up?

Jill: I should have, but I haven't even got my own stuff together yet. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: Your aunt, your father's sister, she drinks too, doesn't she?

Jill: Yes, she's a falling down drunk, and it really kills me. I'm embarrassed to be seen with her, even though I like her when she's sober or just a little bit high. I feel like it's my fault somehow. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: Your uncle Louis just got out of prison again, didn't he?

Jill: He really is embarrassing to me. (Negative Self Assertion) He

called and asked me if he could come live with us for a while. I told him no. But I said I could give him some money so he could find a temporary place. He said he didn't want my money and hung up. In situations like that, I don't know what to do. I feel bad about saying no, but I really had no choice with Mort. He would have made it miserable.

Me: You tried.

Jill: You're right. I did try. (Fogging)

Me: Are you sure you aren't related to some ax murderers?

Jill: You would think so, wouldn't you. (Fogging)

Me: It seems to me that you are ready for Mort and whatever he dishes out to you.

Jill: You may be right. (Fogging)

Me: Remember, you do Fogging and Negative Self Assertion with a straight face. If you want to be sarcastic to Mort, be sarcastic and take the consequences. You can't get the effect you want by Fogging him with a sarcastic tone in your voice, such as "Sure, you may be right," with a look that also says "In a pig's ass." If you want to get bopped, be sarcastic when you Fog Mort.

Jill: Gotcha.

During their next marital conflict, Mort was surprised with Jill's responses. With each successive spat, the length of the spat became shorter and the time between became longer. With each conflict where Jill coped with Mort's criticism, the more she became desensitized to any and all environmental and personal negatives he revealed to her. Responding this way, Jill did not reinforce Mort's critical assessment of her and his behavior changed because he did not win in these confrontations. With the cessation of hostile comments towards her, Jill found no reason to keep her grudges towards Mort, or to withdraw from intimate situations with him, sexual or otherwise. She began to trust him not to hurt her again. In brief, she was Learning To Live With Dragons.

Becoming a psychological adult in using the Environmental Law of Groups to do preventative maintenance on your close relationship or marriage

My friend and agent, Hal Kant, is an entertainment industry lawyer. At least he was when I first met him. Before that you did not want to see

him opposite you in a courtroom. Hal has one of the sharpest minds of anyone I have ever met. Let me give you an example of how he once advised the American Civil Liberties Union, and how his advice is related to the material in this chapter on sex and close relationships; in particular, preventative maintenance of close relationships. How the ACLU deliberately ignored Hal's wise advice is directly related to how you and your mate interact to preserve, (or fail to preserve) your relationship according to the rules of the game described by the Environmental Law of Groups. Let me briefly show you what your relationships and the ACLU have in common.

About thirty years ago, the ACLU sent out a call to Southern California lawyers to attend a planning meeting to defend 400 students and five professors from Cal State Northridge who were arrested the day before by LA County sheriffs and LA City cops for refusing to disperse when so ordered during an on campus free speech demonstration. After the ACLU lead lawyer had his say on what should be done, he asked for comments. Hal then told the group of assembled lawyers what would be necessary to stop Los Angeles area police agencies from breaking up legal and legitimate demonstrations which were not politically popular at that time, but which later grew into the national anti-Vietnam war movement. Hal proposed that the lawyers and the ACLU simply back off and refuse to provide free legal defense for those arrested by the police. If this was done, Hal pointed out, then the governmental agencies would have to provide lawyers for each of the four hundred and five defendants, running up a legal bill of about 1.2 million dollars (a lot of money then), which the city and county would have to dip into their treasuries to pay for. In short, Hal proposed that if the police agencies were going to run amok trampling upon civil rights of citizens, they were going to see a subsequent drop in their own budgets as a negative consequence of their anti-civil rights behavior. The police administrators, Hal pointed out, were not dummies, could themselves see this sequence of consequence if the ACLU refused to provide legal defense, and therefore, all charges against the demonstrators would quickly be dropped. Also, the behavior of the police in making mass arrests would not be repeated.

The lead lawyer for the ACLU thought about Hal's proposal and then said he would have to present it to the ACLU executive council, and would get back to them. A few days later, they met again, and the ACLU lawyer said that contrary to Hal's very interesting proposal, the ACLU was going to provide legal aid to the free speech defendants, because that

was what the ACLU was all about. In short, the ACLU was going to legally protect the defendants' civil rights, even if it meant the charges against them would not be dropped and they would have to remain in jail and risk conviction for the ACLU to do so.

The 400 students, defended by the ACLU, were convicted. The five professors, defended by Hal, were cleared because of a lack of constitutional due process when police refused, or could not, provide witnesses who, the police claimed, would testify to a student conspiracy to riot, the justification for making the arrests in the first place. The ACLU, in the student's cases, instead of insisting upon the witnesses appearing, obtained an order banning their testimony. They apparently didn't believe their student clients' insistence that there was no conspiracy, and therefore no real witnesses.

A reasonable argument can be made that without the ACLU bailing out the police across the country, as predicted by the Law of Groups, the violence which tore this nation apart during the political conflict over Vietnam would not have happened. One is not very violent if one has to pay for it out of one's budget providing overtime, promotions, and perks.

To see how what the ACLU did parallels what you and your partner do, which either preserves your close relationship or destroys it, let's quickly look at the next psychological law. Again, as with the other sub-laws, the Law of Groups is derived from the Environmental Law Of Behavior. ?

The Fifth Environmental Sub-Law: The Environmental Law Of Groups

Every group of two or more people, has two purposes or goals. The first ostensible goal is to produce the stated product or output of the group, giving group members meaningful activities for which they are positively reinforced. The second goal of the group is to protect its members, or anyone else who provides the group meaningful activities, from the negative consequences of doing group activities, i.e., to restrict their group payoff environment from negatives related to group business.

The first goal of a group can be the manufacture and sale of widgets by the corporation, or love and caring from the two person relationship. This goal gives group members meaningful activities, either producing widgets or love and caring, by which they will receive positive payoffs in

belonging to the group.

The second goal is primary for the survival of the group, and will override the first goal if necessary. If the group, or group members do not protect (environmentally restrict) each other from the natural negative consequences (payoffs) of performing group business, the group will soon cease to exist. The second way to insure that a group fails is for members to protect each other from any and all negative consequences, in the name of the group, which have nothing to do with group business.

A simple example describing how we behave under the conditions set forth by the Law of Groups is what happens in relationships when one partner is a gourmet cook. Gourmet cooking uses every pot, pan and bowl in the kitchen. Gourmet cooks do not clean up after themselves. If they had to, they would stop cooking. Gourmet cooking and cleanup is just too much work for one person. If the relationship partner likes gourmet cooking from his or her mate, that partner soon learns that to keep gourmet cooking as a relationship activity, he or she has to bail one's partner out of the natural negative consequences of gourmet cooking; i.e., the clean up. If one does not bail one's partner out of this negative, gourmet cooking ceases. This is a simple example. But its principle applies to everything significant done in the relationship, otherwise there will soon be little that is significant going on in the relationship.

Going back to Hal and the ACLU, the ACLU was operating in accordance with the Law of Groups when it decided that legally protecting the defendants' civil rights was more important than freeing them immediately from police interference, and almost guaranteeing that the police would not repeat their obnoxious behavior in the future. Instead, as predicted by the Law of Groups, the police, who provided the ACLU members with meaningful activities, were bailed out of the negative consequences of this act, i.e., having 1.2 million in legal fees taken out of police budgets, in order to make their mass arrests stick.

So what does the Environmental Law of Groups tell us about maintaining our close relationships, or even friendships? First, that all significant behavior has negative and positive consequences, as exemplified by the illustration of gourmet cooking above. So, if you want your partner or friend to drive you to work each morning and then pick you up each night, be prepared to bail him or her out of the natural negative consequences of that act. For example, if traffic is chronically heavy and tiresome along your route, occasionally offer to drive the car instead of your partner or friend to give him or her a break. If your partner or friend

can't drive you occasionally, be ready with an alternate plan for you to get to work that takes the responsibility and guilty feeling off the shoulders of your partner or friend.

Relationship sex is also a good example of protecting your partner from a behavior's natural, negative consequences. There can be a number of negative consequences of sex. If pregnancy is unwanted, care can be taken so that does not occur. In this day and age, if sex is not exclusive to one partner, care can be taken so that preventative measures against disease are successful. But in the sexual act itself, protection of ones partner from the natural, negative consequences is quite relevant. A classic complaint of female partners is that of male indifference after orgasm, which suborns sex of its love connection. Protecting one's partner from this feeling of indifference by remaining awake and physically caring meets the requirements of the Law of Groups for relationship maintenance. If one's partner is not a flaming sexual liberal, it would be wise to gradually introduce him or her into your own particular expanded socio-sexual environment of kinky preferences to allow adaptation to perceived negatives of kinky sex to occur over a period of time. In short, expand your partner's sexual payoff environment gradually to eliminate any unnecessary anxiety about doing it your way.

On the other hand, in clinical situations, one can consistently observe behavior that is destructive, which is predicted by the Law of Groups. Spousal abuse is one example. Typically one spouse protects his or her mate from legal action after being beaten up, sometimes severely. This abuse, apparently, is assumed to be part of the relationship, and it is not. If the abusive spouse did what he or she did to anyone else, after a period of time, the abuser would wind up in jail or a psychiatric ward for quite a spell.

Another example, which I love to use, is the teenager whose mother called me because she suspected her son was suffering from a school phobia. School phobias are quite rare, and have definite characteristics one can look for. After hearing none of these in her description of the problem, I asked her to tell me why she though her son had a phobia. As it turned out, a few months before, her son missed the 7:00 am school bus to high school, and not wanting him to miss school, she drove him there. Oddly enough, the next week, he missed the bus again. She drove him to school again. After that he began to miss the bus on a regular basis, several times a week. I pointed out to her that she was mistakenly bailing her son out of negative consequences that had nothing to do with normal

family activities — she wasn't driving him to school because he was helping his father milk the cows and re-seed the south forty starting at 4:00 am and finishing at 7:15 am. The negative consequences of his own behavior were his own negative consequences, not those to be protected from by a loving mother as part of belonging to a family. She recognized what I was saying immediately. The next time her son missed the school bus, she told him that she was going to town, in the opposite direction and he had better find a way to school himself — with no excuse note either. After that, he never missed the bus again. She told me that her son had nothing to do with her side of the family and must be a clone of his father.

One thing you might have noticed in this analysis of the mother's problem with her son. She was not allowing her son to experience an expanded environment of his own choosing; having to hitch hike, ask a neighbor for a ride, catch the commercial bus, call an expensive taxi, and then explain his tardiness to teachers with lifted eyebrows who had heard all these excuses before. In short, she was creating a future psychological problem for her son without knowing it. She withdrew (protected) him from the environmental and personal negatives he should have experienced (she restricted his payoff environment.) If his lack of concern worked for missing the school bus, and it did, then how many other responsibilities would he soon try to get out of? In short, she was spoiling him rotten, setting him up to fail in adult life if he grew to automatically expect (acquire a belief) that other adults would bail him out of life's natural negative consequences of his behavior. As you can see, as an adult, he would be quite confused, angry, and resentful, the three initial reactions to a psychological problem, when his belief — taught by his mother — that he could expect others to cover for him, no longer worked. So his mother's restricting his environment by protecting him from the natural negative consequences of his actions would eventually lead to situations for him where *Here Be Dragons* coping would be used.

I could go on describing different relationship connected behaviors and pointing out obvious negative consequences of these behaviors. If their negatives are not eliminated, the future probability of these behaviors will diminish. With you understanding the description given by the Law of Groups on how a relationship operates and predicts whether a group or relationship will survive or not, it may help if you try to prevent trouble in your relationship systematically. For instance, you could make a list of behaviors, which you feel to be important group activities in your

close relationship. With this list, you can write what you observe to be the natural negative consequences of important relationship behaviors, and/or negatives, which your mate complains are consequences of any of these particular behaviors. Using that set of prompt sheets of expected negatives you can see to it that your mate is protected from them. You can make the preventative maintenance program of your relationship a systematic helpful reality. Rather than the usual on and off, hit and miss, by guess and by God sequence, which turns into a rescue attempt to save the relationship you can create a simple routine to strengthen it. This method of using what we know to be psychologically reliable fits the motto of behavioral therapy; "All I want is an unfair advantage."

With that understanding of what you can do systematically to use a psychological law to your own and your relationship's advantage, let's turn now to the next chapter on personal loss; of a job, ability, a mate, a friend, a family member, etc., and how to cope with that loss.

Chapter Nine

Learn To Live With Dragons As A Psychological Adult Dealing With The Loss Of Job, Ability, Marriage, Love, Family, Life goal, Or Career Through Retirement

Not the winning hand, but the losing one tells how good a player you are

Harold Sanford Kant
Poker World Champion

I was in the U.S. Army in the early fifties, during the early part of the cold war. I was in intelligence. Very interesting stuff at that time. Let me compare for you that experience with my career as a graduate student working for my doctorate in psychology to see what happens when you suffer a loss, what causes you to hurt and what you can do about it. It could be a loss of job, a loved one, an ability, etc., even a life goal. It is vitally important for you to know how to get over such a loss as rapidly and as painlessly as possible, for I can guarantee you will suffer some such loss during your lifetime. Loss always involves both environmental negatives and depression. Comparing my army and school experiences, let me tell you about depression from a personal and professional viewpoint, what causes it, what does not, and what you can do about it, for it is to some degree, part of all psychological problems.

Forty years ago, I found myself overseas in a presidential unit. I was a cryptographer then. Cryptographers are like janitors; they know everything because they have to have access to everything. The job of our outpost was to listen to radio traffic of the Chinese and Russian Red Armies, and we did. From listening we could tell the what, where, and when of every unit above company size within the two Red Armies. Every once in a while, however, the radio traffic quieted down. Our real boss then was Allen Dulles, head of the CIA. Allen Dulles didn't like Red Army radio silence. So whenever this happened, he would order a U.S. military plane to "lose" its way and overfly China or Russia. Both Red Armies reacted to Dulles' ploy as if they had just fallen off the turnip truck on the way into town. They would start jabbering excitedly at each other with the same electronic intelligence results for our outpost as

before. Back then it was interesting for a young man right in the thick of foreign military intrigue, knowing what was happening behind the scenes and seeing the results unfold in front of you.

What has happened to you if you get depressed? You can bet your combat boots a significant part of your personal payoff environment has been drastically restricted

The work I was doing in the army was ostensibly important, meaningful, interesting, exciting, and at times, the army was just plain fun. A grand adventure. So what has this little tale about military intelligence forty years ago have to do with depression? In spite of all its good times, the loss of the army for me didn't mean a damned thing. Compare this with six years of graduate school where there was very little fun, lots of difficult and very hard work, was usually dull as ditchwater, and at times very unpleasant. Yet when I left graduate school, I became the most depressed ever in my life. This is my point, and it's an important one. Your feeling good does not depend upon ostensible "fun" things, but those rewards you get from doing what is important to you. Let me explain — especially what this point has to do with you when you suffer a loss.

Even though the army and I usually didn't agree on everything, it asked me to re-up and take over the cryptosection when my tour of duty was finished. I declined because I was listening to a different drummer beating outside the camp gates. In psychological terms, I was not depressed because I was leaving where the action and fun supposedly was. You see, to me the army was a distraction that kept me from doing what I really wanted — to continue my studies. I was not depressed because my environment in the army was not really restricted to just the army and little else. My personal positive payoffs were independent of the army. When I left, I did not go from a very restricted environment — the army — into a more restricted environment, life without the army — with nothing to take its place. That's what happens to regular army career soldiers when they retire, as well as most civilian retirees who sit in the back yard with a can of beer and watch the grass grow. Because of going into this dreadfully restricted environment with very few payoffs which give life meaning, life after retirement all too often accurately reflects Thomas Hobbes description of life in earlier, less civilized times; nasty, brutish, and short. Retirement with no structure and plan is a guarantee for getting severely depressed and giving up. As we can see, it

does not matter if a psychological problem comes about because our environment changes independent of us, or we have to retire from something we are dependent upon — like the army — or finish serving time in prison — or for me, taking my doctorate — that causes the change.

Remove Yourself From The Dragon equals withdrawal from your environment equals depression

The hallmark of depression is withdrawal or drastic restriction of one's payoff environment. For me, I went right back into school after the army, studying psychology. Now everyone knows that undergraduate life is anything but restricted. But when I began to take my studies seriously, preparing for graduate school, I began to set myself up to be severely depressed later, without a clue on what to do about it. When I finished getting my Ph.D., I went into a chronic depression that lasted about six months. This phenomenon, I was told a few months before finishing by those older and wiser, was a common reaction to graduating with a Ph.D. But my advisors didn't tell me how to avoid or get over this chronic depression.

I have always said that if you want a doctoral degree, you have to be a bit wacko because you sacrifice so much for it. Some of us get it in four years. Some of us take longer, like myself. Irrespective of how long it takes, during that time, you basically have to give up almost every other serious interest in life and concentrate on learning your field of study. Graduate school is about the most restricted situation that I can think of that one voluntarily enters. The doctoral candidate spends most of his or her waking hours on student work. When one finishes the doctorate, the graduate student psychological environment changes within a day from a very restricted environment to a drastically restricted environment. In short, finishing up, you go from having an overwhelming, years long, disciplined schedule of activities to earn your degree on one day, with nothing to do the next. Then, you ask a scary question, "What in hell am I going to do now?" Finishing graduate school is a very significant loss, about as serious in psychological effect as being fired. That type of drastic withdrawal from the environment is the direct cause of chronic depression. It took me about six months of being chronically depressed to get my life back to normal again, getting all my old irons, and a bunch of new ones, heated up in the fire.

Getting back to finishing up my army intelligence tale, as we know

now, what we were told about the cold war from both sides was little more than empire building by civil servants in both the Western and Soviet intelligence community. Reality was, aside from nuclear suicide, Russia hadn't a snowball's chance in hell of doing us any real harm, nor did China. If you doubt that observation, look to Afghanistan, Desert Storm in Iraq, or Chechnya, to see the poor performance of the Soviet military and/or its top of the line equipment. We really were dealing with a military/political machine that had fallen off the turnip truck on its way to the big city. The CIA publicly predicted the Soviet system would collapse and break up ten years prior, given a nudge, so the Reagan Administration baited them into going broke with its multi-billion dollar "Star Wars" Strategic Defense Initiative, while having no real intent of carrying it through. The boys on the turnip truck fell for it again and as they say, the rest is history. Forty years after Dulles and they still think Republicans deal cards from the top of the deck.

A cynic might note these observations would not have been much help to boost the economy over the past 40 years in justifying taking on a national economic debt of trillions of bucks to fuel the industrial military complex and give it, and its millions of employees, make work that was really not necessary for our national security. This observation is also pertinent to my point, for can you imagine how depressed those boosters of the cold war would have been without such make work expenditures giving them activities that were meaningful and rewarding in their lives.

Is depression a sickness? Or is it what happens to normal people when things don't work out?

Let's briefly look at depression and its emotional siblings, anger and anxiety, so you can understand that they are not indications of mental illness, but normal reactions to changes in the environment, and what one can do to rid oneself of depression and anger during times of loss. Then we can move on to desensitizing yourself to the environmental and personal negatives involved with loss, and the anxiety they generate.

When I was a graduate student learning clinical psychology, how you scored on the MMPI (Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory) with respect to anger, anxiety and depression supposedly determined how neurotic you were. These three measures were called the neurotic triad. Things have changed since then. The term neurosis, coined by no less than Freud himself to distinguish the strange things we latent normals do

from those of the psychotics, has been deleted from the scientific descriptive literature used to classify psychic disorders and dysfunctions. Neurosis implied pathology when there was no empirical evidence for it.

How about anger and anxiety?

However, if you just think about it for a bit in a Darwinian sense, you will find you do not need a scientific imprimatur to see what anger, anxiety, and depression are, and what their naturalistic purposes in enhancing the survival of our successful ancestors were. Contrary to the professional way these responses of our bodies and psyches to stress are often described, they are not illnesses, but specific physiological responses which increased the probability of survival in certain circumstances. In short, if you get angry, anxious or depressed, it does not mean you are mentally ill but reflects the autonomic physiological/emotional coping of our successful ancestors.

Anxiety is a survival mechanism

For our successful ancestors, who, minding their own business walking down a forest trail, found the trail made a sharp turn with them suddenly facing a saber toothed tiger, did not do what we now describe as the mentally healthy thing. They did not calmly think out their response to this threat. Instead, they became anxious to the point of panic, with heart racing and blood pressure at the extreme, turned and ran to the nearest tree and tried to climb it. No engineering stress analysis was required beforehand. If the tree selected crashed to the ground under our ancestor's weight, he simply kept running and climbing until he found one to hold his weight. Behaving in this way would only enhance his chances of not becoming a lower part of the food chain.

Anger is a survival mechanism

On the other hand, if our ancestor could not run and the tiger whacked him a good one across the butt, he was very likely to get angry, increasing his aggressiveness and the blood flow to his peripheral muscles, augmenting his energy level dramatically. His chances of survival would be greatly improved if he could hit the tiger a good one on the ear with a well thrown coconut, rock or a mushy mango; even better with three or four. Bushmen in the Kalahari routinely take food away from cheetahs

with no more than a four foot, whippy switch, with which they beat the ground in front of them. Predators typically do not attack possible meals which fight back and demonstrably can do injury to the predator. That is just not good food chain economics. The predator who ignored this pragmatic fact would not last long in the competition for survival of the fittest. A whack here, a cut there, a bruise and a lump routinely thrown in with each meal soon results in a very beat up predator who is good for little, including hunting up the next meal. Survival of the fittest means in for the long run, which really means look for the free lunch first.

Depression is a survival mechanism

Of the three built-in psychophysiological-behavioral responses to stress, depression is the most interesting as well as the most important. When we get depressed, our entire psychophysiology shuts down. Our metabolism is drastically reduced. Our endocrine chemistry stops responding to outside stimuli, slowing our total system. We do not get excited or motivated by much of anything. If left alone, we do little or nothing, as if we had to conserve our energy, what little we have. That description of what happens when we are depressed is also an accurate picture of what would happen to us if we were placed in a harsh winter environment of twenty-five thousand years ago. That would be much like what happened to our ancestors who successfully survived harsh winters with little game or forage, year after year after year. Instead of optimistically, and futilely, going out in such harsh conditions to hunt and wasting what little energy they had, our successful ancestors who survived got depressed and sat around the fire in the cave, feeling miserable and doing nothing but harboring what little food they had, until, from where they sat, they could see something good to eat outside the cave.

This anecdotal description of depression points out two things. First, depression is a physiological reaction to a loss of something significant: something from which you get a significant payoff. In the above case of our ancestors, a steady supply of food and a successful series of hunting and gathering behaviors. Second, depression is a significant reduction of behavior. When you are depressed over the loss of something significant, the more depressed you are, the less active behavior you show. This analysis of depression as a reaction to loss applies to any type of loss; loss of food for our ancestors, for ourselves loss of an ability, a job, someone close like a friend, spouse, child, family member, even to the

loss of a life goal. The major characteristic of loss, in fact, is depression and reduction in active behavior. Also keep in mind that depression basically is caused by severe environmental restriction. Therefore it is almost a given that loss of something significant will produce a psychological problem.

To get out of depression, expand your payoff environment

There is a very successful, simple behavioral method to eliminate chronic depression that lasts more than a few weeks. It is based upon the assumption that depression is the result of a very restricted environment with few positive payoffs as described above. The thing to do therefore, is to expand the restricted environment causing the depression, i.e., to put more positive payoffs in it. The depressed person first makes a list of high frequency things he or she used to do before becoming depressed. They may be fun things or not, but must be high frequency. They could be jogging, taking hikes, sex, cooking meals, bowling, cycling, chess, gardening, checkers, etc. High frequency things have their own positive payoffs built in, or they would not occur with a high frequency. This assumption simplifies things greatly because all we need to do is to count the number of times an activity occurs to see if it will generate positive payoffs; no subjective decisions are required. Then the depressed person picks three things from the list and guarantees to do them during the next week. In the week after that, he or she adds one more activity to practice. In the next week, another activity is added. This progression is kept up until he or she is performing one high frequency activity during each day of the week. This activities program typically eliminates the depression by the fourth to fifth week of reentering the general payoff environment through engaging in the activities.

Losses hurt. The loss of love is probably the most psychologically traumatic thing that will happen to you in your lifetime. It reduces most of us to spaced out retards for months, if not years. The loss of a child is devastating. You are smothered in grief and helplessness from which you cannot find your way out. The loss of a job or career, or ability can cripple. With it goes your self respect and optimism — your “can do” philosophy. The loss of a friend or loving family member can shake you to your roots. Life gets iffy, even threatening, when you lose someone whom you trusted and relied upon to make you smile and feel good.

What do you do when things like this happen? You play the hand that is dealt to you, as painful and as long as it takes to deal with it. For most

of us, a psychological problem develops because we either deny the loss, if possible, or then retreat from that environment of our life to avoid the negative payoffs which our loss causes or reveals to us. It usually points out dramatically that we are not as put together as well as we thought we were. We can get really rattled when significant loss occurs and do not know how to deal with it. The operant mode of coping is to become a psychological coward; to restrict our suddenly expanded payoff environment, to withdraw, to avoid the painful negatives if we can. In short, we refuse to play the poker hand dealt us, and suffer the consequences of doing so.

Clinical observation points out that using this typical coping mode of withdrawal, for example, in cases of divorce, death, or relationship breakup extends and strings out the painful consequences of avoiding reality to approximately half the time the relationship existed. If you were going together in an intimate relationship for six years, it would take three years to get over its breakup by avoiding dealing with the relationship's demise and getting on with living in the sociosexual environment of other men or women as possible mates. If, however, one remains within the negatively expanded psychological environment in which the loss occurred, instead of fleeing from it, the typical person adapts to loss and copes with it and its pain within several weeks.

For the loss of love, expand your payoff environment

This observation is the basis of a behaviorally oriented, in vivo, self-help treatment method for loss of love developed by my old friend and colleague, Dr. Zev Wanderer, and published in his book on the subject, *Letting Go*. Within his treatment plan, Zev set up procedures whereby the person suffering from loss of love would be required to reenter the sociosexual payoff environment wherein he or she was hurt emotionally. For example, one day would be set aside for grieving. All the memorabilia of the love affair would be collected within a room and the person would go over and over it, recollecting all the details of each photograph, each matchbook, each restaurant menu, etc., until he or she were cried out. At the end of eight hours of emoting — much more than was required to do the job of desensitization of this material — how many tears can you shed over a matchbook? — the grieving was ended, and the material tossed in the trash can. Another clever procedure was to take a sympathetic friend to the favorite restaurant of the former mate and sit at the same table and order the same meal as before. Then the subject of

dinner conversation was about the broken up relationship and the meals taken in this restaurant. This conversation would go on until the subject produced no tears or sadness, but just boredom. Invariably the lost relationship could not sustain the conversation and it turned to how good or bad the food was. This method of forcing the person with the psychological problem to remain in the environment which revealed painful negatives about oneself and one's former mate was very successful. It took, on the average, about six weeks, because of simple logistics, to repeat most of the behavioral and environmental patterns of the relationship, and to desensitize oneself to the negatives experienced. At the end of that six week period, clients could typically deal with any and all matters of the former relationship with little or no discomfort.

Zev's method of getting you back into the environment in which you were hurt is excellent, but requires that you do all the desensitization *in vivo*; i.e., have all the photographs, souvenir theater tickets, etc., in front of you. I recommend it to you because it works and works well. However, in this area of coping with loss, thankfully, you have a choice. Using Fogging and Negative Self Assertion only requires someone else to verbally present you with all the environmental and personal negatives generated by the breakup of your relationship. This verbal method, as used to desensitize one to the environmental and personal negatives inherent in other psychological problems, works on the same behavioral principle to neutralize your understandable emotional reactions, not only to the breakup of your close relationship, but to the reasons for the breakup as well. This procedure is illustrated in the following teaching dialogs about accepting and coping with loss.

Psychological Problem Type V:

Irrational emotional self assessment in dealing with negative consequences of personal loss in relationships, career, physical and mental ability.

Joan is a young woman who filed for divorce after her husband, Randy, became blatant in seeing another woman, and refused to stop. Even though she filed for divorce, Joan felt that the breakup was still her fault; if she were on top of things, she could have prevented the decline in her marriage. In the following dialog, conditions are set up to a) desensitize her to the negatives brought about by the breakup between she and her husband, and b) desensitize her to the conflicts in how each individual marriage should work, with some people arguing marriages must

be like this, that, and the other thing, while others claim marriages must be just the opposite. Joan first used both Here Be Dragons primitive coping options — Remove The Dragon and Remove Yourself from the Dragon. Then she had the option of using the more human coping methods of Defang The Dragon and Leaning to Live With Dragons. In brief, this dialog is to teach Joan how to become a psychological adult with respect to marriage and divorce, even infidelity, as well as the controversies surrounding them.

Coping with the loss of love through breakup of a marriage

We can look at Joan's predicament according to the development or etiology of a psychological problem to see if it fits the pattern of a difficulty that can be worked systematically through abstract verbal desensitization. Hence, we can make a match with:

- 1) A change in her environment, from a restricted, close relationship environment to an expanded environment wherein lots of negatives are revealed by her husband's infidelities and intransigency.
- 2) A malfunctioning belief due to environmental change. Her spouse's infidelity and intransigence in working things out with her violated her belief in the working of marriages and relationships, and how their problems could be resolved.
- 3) Joan's spouse's sexual preference for another woman is a prime negative in the new, expanded marital environment. More major negatives, like her spouse's refusal to work things out are evident, as well as others that take only a moment of your imagination to see without my help, such as Randy carrying on in public with this other woman, where Joan's friends could see what was happening to her.
- 4) Personal negatives abound in this situation. Joan's evaluation of her sexual appeal, as a person, as someone smart, as having maturity, and many other important personality facets are in question; in short, herself and how greatly deficient she is.
- 5) Denial, defensiveness, and withdrawal, along with rationalization on why she is not to blame are evident. Since the filing for divorce, Joan has avoided any sociosexual encounters, and withdrawn from the whole

male/female relationship payoff environment.

With this match of her situation to the model of the psychological problem, it is clear that desensitization of the environmental negatives and personal negatives — Defang The Dragon would help her to get back into the male/female sociosexual environment, where she could work on her future life and put this failed relationship behind her. With this analysis of the problem, let's now look at a teaching dialog covering Joan's loss. As in all the dialogs, this one is a composite dialog taken from the experiences of many learners, edited for brevity, confidentiality, interest, and teaching purposes. *

Verbal Behavior Therapy Dialog 24.

Learning to cope with the environmental and personal negatives of a divorce.

Me: You understand Fogging and Negative Self Assertion?

Joan: Yes, the practice helped a lot.

Me: You know why we are doing this?

Joan: Yes, to get me off the dime and moving with my life.

Me: How long have you been divorced?

Joan: It becomes final next month.

Me: And all this time since you filed for divorce, you have been a hermit?

Joan: Pretty much.

Me: It's my job to desensitize you to the bad feelings you have about your failed marriage, to your almost ex, Randy, and to anything that's negative connected to it.

Joan: I understand.

Me: I may have to point out some really nasty things that are real, but which you may not have accepted yet.

Joan: I agree. That seems the thing to do.

Me: Some of the things I will point out can be argued by different people one way or another.

* Footnote

The how-to-do-it, self-help model of the five etiological steps that can be used to describe your own psychological problem can be found in the Appendices at the end of the book (see Appendix A.) After filling out the description of your psychological problem, this information can be used to organize the practice list of environmental and personal negatives you will use to resolve your problem (see Appendix B.)

Joan: I understand.

Me: The point here is not to be "correct," because there is no correct way of doing things in a marriage. There is only what works, no matter what anyone else says. We all didn't come off the same assembly line, so to speak.

Joan: Okay.

Me: Some people would argue that you should do things according to A in a marriage, some people would argue for B, the opposite. Your job here is to learn how to rise above any controversy between A and B. But the only way you can do that is to desensitize yourself to any emotional reaction to negatives. You did A and someone would say you should have done B. Make sense?

Joan: Yes.

Me: My job is to get at things you may be blaming yourself for, even without verbalizing them. So I have to use a shotgun approach and accuse you of every possible negative, stupid, careless behavior and attitude that could screw up a relationship. Capice?

Joan: Yes.

Me: You have avoided doing this yourself up to now.

Joan: Are we beginning now?

Me: We started when we started talking.

Joan: Okay. That was dumb of me not to realize that. (Negative Self Assertion) And I probably have been avoiding this as much as possible. (Fogging)

Me: When did you first suspect that your ex, Randy, was fooling around?

Joan: About 18 months ago.

Me: And you didn't do anything about it?

Joan: No, that was stupid wasn't it? (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: That was like giving him a license to screw anybody he wanted.

Joan: You're probably right. I should have done something, anything might have helped. (Fogging)

Me: Basically, it's your fault. If you had done something earlier, the marriage wouldn't have fallen apart.

Joan: You're probably right. I've thought that I couldn't have done it any worse if I'd confronted him then. (Fogging)

Me: If you had paid more attention to his needs, he wouldn't have had to go elsewhere for his fun and games.

- Joan: That really hurts. As much as I tell myself that's crap, I feel deep down that it was my responsibility to make sure he got what he needed from this marriage. And I didn't fulfill it. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: Your mother would think that you failed in your responsibility to keep the marriage together.
- Joan: She would. (Fogging)
- Me: You probably hate to listen to her good advice.
- Joan: I certainly do. (Fogging)
- Me: That's not a good attitude. Just because you don't like her, it doesn't mean she is always wrong.
- Joan: You're probably right. I shouldn't just write her off like I do. (Fogging)
- Me: The sexual stuff is only the tip of the iceberg. You didn't take care of the rest of the marriage either.
- Joan: I don't know what you mean.
- Me: Yes you do. You were married less than a month and you got a job to keep yourself from getting bored at home.
- Joan: That's true. I did. (Fogging)
- Me: Then you insisted that he help you with all the housework that you no longer had time for.
- Joan: You're right. I did that too. (Fogging)
- Me: And you think that was only fair.
- Joan: Right, I did think it was fair. (Fogging)
- Me: And look what happened to your fair marriage.
- Joan: But anything else would not be fair.
- Me: You're right. It would not be fair, but would you rather be fair, or have a marriage that worked?
- Joan: I don't understand. What are you saying?
- Me: Did you take the trouble to find out if Randy would go along with you being a housework sergeant instead of hiring a maid?
- Joan: If we hired a maid, that would cost us as much as I earned.
- Me: You didn't take the trouble to see if he would go along with it.
- Joan: You're right, I didn't. That was stupid and asking for trouble. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: You were not flexible in your marriage. It had to follow your rules of fairness, equality, what your friends thought it should be, etc., etc., etc.
- Joan: You're probably right. (Fogging) I did push for what I wanted

and was a bit rigid. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: It sounds like you just decided you wanted a certain type of marriage, and to hell with the consequences. Pretty dumb not to think things out for yourself.

Joan: It sounds like you are blaming me for everything. Like it's the woman's fault when things go wrong!

Me: Do you want to argue liberation politics or get over feeling like crap about the negatives in your relationship no matter whose fault it was?

Joan: But it's not fair!

Me: You're right. It was all his fault. (After a pause) Does that make you feel better about this mess?

Joan: No. I'm just bitching about it again.

Me: Bitch all you want. Does that do the trick for you?

Joan: No. You're right. Let's go back to your way.

Me: Okay, as I said before, it sounds like you just decided you wanted a certain type of marriage, and to hell with the consequences. Pretty dumb not to think things out for yourself.

Joan: You're right. I didn't think things out before I insisted on them. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: And if he said he didn't like the way you wanted things, you got at him under the table, as if butter wouldn't melt in your mouth.

Joan: You're right. That was a crappy thing for me to do. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: And you wonder why he went looking for female companionship elsewhere?

Joan: You're right. Really dumb. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: Also, you just didn't take as much interest in sex as he did.

Joan: I certainly felt that was true. (Fogging)

Me: It seems that you just didn't bother to be sexy to keep him interested.

Joan: You may be right. (Fogging) And if I didn't even bother when I had the chance, then I deserved what I got.

Me: The bimbo he went with is probably a lot better looking than you.

Joan: She probably is. (Fogging)

Me: Seems a lot more charming and warm. Took care to make sure she would appeal.

Joan: I'll bet she did. (Fogging)

Me: From what you told me about her, she seems a bit more interested

in pleasing men than you are.

Joan: She probably is. (Fogging)

Me: No wonder Randy began to spend more and more time with her than you.

Joan: How much of this do I have to take?

Me: Beginning to hurt?

Joan: Yes, damn it.

Me: Then I'm doing my job. How much more of your life do you want to spend moping around the fringes of male/female relations? When do you want to get back in the middle of things?

Joan: As soon as possible.

Me: Then remember, in this area, no pain, absolutely no gain.

Joan: Okay, let's get on with it. You're probably right. (Fogging) It's my own fault, my stupidity and laziness that he wanted to spend more time with her than with me. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: You probably think you still love him.

Joan: You're right. I probably still do. (Fogging)

Me: Please cut the romance novel crap. After what he did to you, there is no love left, just rage and depression.

Joan: Maybe you're right. (Fogging) I am still pissed about what he did and is still doing.

Me: I would think you hate him with a vengeance.

Joan: It would not be cool to hate him. That would admit I am still emotionally dependent.

Me: You don't want to be emotionally dependent, then first admit you are.

Joan: I don't like to, but I am. I still cry at night in bed. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: Your mother, even though she loves you, probably thinks you are a stubborn, uncooperative, lazy bitch who deserves what she got.

Joan: I'm sure she does think that. (Fogging)

Me: You wouldn't listen to her advice and you let your marriage self destruct.

Joan: That is really cruel of you to say that to me.

Me: Really hurts huh?

Joan: I feel like crying again.

Me: That's one way of getting what you want. That is, if I could keep you crying for about eight hours. This way is simpler and faster.

Joan: You're sure this will work?

- Me: No guarantees in life or therapy, but the motto of this method is "All I want is an unfair advantage." All we have to do is cover all the negatives, over and over and over again until you are bored.
- Joan: Hit me with it again.
- Me: You wouldn't listen to her and you let your marriage self destruct.
- Joan: You're probably right. I was too stubborn to listen to her advice. (Fogging) And I did let my marriage self destruct. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: Mom probably thinks something is wrong with you in the head to let things slip so badly in your marriage.
- Joan: I'm sure she does feel that way. (Fogging)
- Me: Your mother thinks that you could have done the same thing as that bimbo did with no sweat, and still have a marriage.
- Joan: You're probably right, I could have. (Fogging)
- Me: She probably thinks that you were too proud to hustle and save your marriage.
- Joan: I probably was. (Fogging)
- Me: Those whom the gods wish to destroy first make proud.
- Joan: You're right. I deserved it through my own stupidity, stubbornness and pride. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: You probably... Etc., etc.
- Joan: You may be ... Etc., etc.

Once Joan had sufficiently desensitized herself to her socio-sexual environmental negatives — like her ex and his bimbo girlfriend — and also to her personal negatives, the way she expressed her sexuality and her bad judgment, she began to feel confident about herself and how she would cope in future relationships. After this she began to join with her age group in weekend social events, etc., and started to create, once again, a normal social life.

Coping with the loss of love through relationship breakup

Rick's situation is similar to that of Joan, but with a significant difference. His girl friend saw him as a patsy who would provide a crash pad until something better became available. Along with a negative memory of fooling around with someone else, she left him with only half of his cash in the joint checking account she asked him to set up. Their shaky relationship finally ended when she moved in with another man, with whom she had been having a long term affair without Rick's knowledge.

Inadvertently rubbing salt in his wounds, weeks after she left, Rick kept realizing things were missing from his apartment. Rick experienced all the signs of an emotional reaction that precedes a psychological problem; anger, resentment, feeling like a fool and wondering why he hadn't before seen what was going on right in front of him. When he became depressed — a result of restricting his sociosexual environment by Removing Yourself from the Dragon, he sought professional help. Rick and I explored the environmental and personal negatives revealed by his live in girl-friend's behavior, attitude and departure with the aim of desensitizing him to them, Defang The Dragon, and hopefully allowing him to Learn To Live With Dragons in future sociosexual relationships.

Verbal Behavior Therapy Dialog 25.

Learning to cope with the environmental and personal negatives of a broken relationship, infidelity, and being made into a fool.

Me: It seems like you are a real mess since Susan left you for that other guy.

Rick: I don't need to be reminded of this crap. I really loved that woman. After she left I wanted to die.

Me: I don't understand, I thought we had discussed your problem and you said you would like to try this method to get over your anger, upset and depression about Susan.

Rick: Yes, that was just an editorial comment.

Me: So, are you willing to give Fogging and Negative Self Assertion a chance to reduce your negative emotional reactions to Susan's getting involved with another guy and dropping you like a bad habit?

Rick: Okay, but I don't like it.

Me: Has anybody ever said that you have to like the taste of aspirin to get rid of your headache?

Rick: I get your point.

Me: Let's try the environmental negatives first, okay?

Rick: Sure.

Me: Susan must have been really turned on by this guy.

Rick: This is really painful, but you may be right. (Fogging)

Me: Nobody said you have to like the taste of aspirin.

Rick: Okay, you may be right. She may have really been turned on by that guy. (Fogging)

Me: It would take a lot of screwing around with him to make up her

mind that she was going to dump you. Were you blind?

Rick: I must have been. (Fogging)

Me: Do you know when she first started to play around?

Rick: My guess is about six months ago.

Me: And you didn't catch on for six months? You really stick your head in the sand in a relationship don't you.

Rick: Again, what can I say?. You are probably right. (Fogging)

Me: Why should she find this other guy more sexually attractive than you?

Rick: You're right. I should know why, but I don't.

Me: Did you ignore her requests for attention from you?

Rick: I guess I did. I was pretty wrapped up in my job. (Fogging)

Me: Either sounds like you didn't want your relationship or Susan to bother you, or she is a sexual social worker, tending to those most in need.

Rick: I feel that it was my fault, (Negative Self Assertion) but damned if I know why or how.

Me: You plead ignorance?

Rick: And dumb too. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: Being dumb and ignorant does not help.

Rick: But admitting to being dumb and ignorant is a first step in correcting things.

Me: Touché! You are so right. But you need more than identifying the problem.

Rick: You're right. I should know what to do, but I don't — except for doing what we are doing now. (Fogging)

Me: Don't you know anything about relationships and women?

Rick: I guess I really don't know much. (Fogging)

Me: You sound like a real dumb ass. What did Susan see in you in the first place?

Rick: I don't know. She must have seen something good.

Me: Maybe she was just looking for an easy crash pad. A place to flop with nobody really sharp to check up on her. That would explain your ulcerous anger at her.

Rick: I would hope not, cause that makes me seem like a real fool. But maybe you're right. (Fogging)

Me: That means she was just using you.

Rick: That's probably what it means. (Fogging)

Me: She saw you as a fool who could be conned into supporting her?

- Rick: That's what it sounds like, doesn't it? (Fogging)
Me: Did she walk out with the bank account?
Rick: It was a joint account. She took half.
Me: Did she put in half?
Rick: No, I put in most of it. A real jerk, hey?
Me: What do you think?
Rick: A real jerk who got taken. (Negative Self Assertion)
Me: On the other hand, maybe she was a straight up gal who just couldn't put up with your ignoring her any more?
Rick: There is that to consider. (Fogging) But I don't think so. I think that was an incidental to being a fool who could be taken, and she took me. (Negative Self Assertion)
Me: You think women are that hard and cruel?
Rick: She sure was. Yes, I'm sure that some women can be that hard and cruel. (Fogging)
Me: I think you are just carping to get sympathy after she dumped you for a much better guy.
Rick: I probably am doing that too. (Fogging)
Me: You are also... etc.
Rick: You are probably right. I am also ... (Fogging)

After sufficient practice in dealing with the negatives resulting from Susan leaving him in such a destructive way, Rick agreed to start mixing again in sociosexual situations and promised not to play the victim in giving himself something to talk about with the women he met in social activities.

Learning to cope with the environmental and personal negatives of loss of a spouse through death

Helen lost her spouse of twenty years, Harvey, when he contracted pneumonia in the hospital after an auto accident. After Harvey's death, Helen simply withdrew from most other human contact, especially from socializing with other couples and families, with whom she and Harvey had healthy social ties. Although this dialog describes the experiences of a woman over forty, it is appropriate for widows of any age and circumstance; with younger children, older children, or no children. It is apt and particular to women since many of them report feeling angry, bitter, and cheated because their spouse died on them. In particular they report

strong feelings of anger at the deceased spouse, and subsequent guilt for having these feelings. Even with the feelings of anger and bitterness, the etiology of the psychological problem is very similar to the other types of loss involving divorced spouses or ex-lovers in a close relationship. The negatives to be covered are almost identical to those in the previous two dialogs, wherein the remaining spouse or lover has very mixed feelings about the person lost, with identical malfunctioning beliefs that the relationship should have lasted forever, and therefore a) no replacement relationship is possible, or b) it is impossible just to socialize with the other sex.

Before this malfunctioning belief can be examined and challenged, the negatives resulting from the change have to be thoroughly dealt with, and accepted. Prior to creating another close relationship, the malfunctioning belief has to be dealt with. Also a close analogy can be drawn with the loss of relationship through a death with the loss of ability, or retirement. With all of these problems, we can see the identical process of going from a very restricted environment — wherein most payoffs are gotten — to a dreadfully restricted environment — wherein there are very few payoffs to be had. That is the typical result of primitive, animalistic Removing Yourself from the Dragon coping. The resolution of this problem is, of course, expansion of the payoff environment, particularly in the social area, or the more human coping option of becoming a psychological adult through Learning To Live With Dragons.

Again, this is a composite dialog covering the experiences of a number of learners coping with loss, edited for confidentiality, brevity, interest and teaching purposes.

Verbal Behavior Therapy Dialog 26.

Extinguishing the environmental and personal negatives of losing a mate.

Me: You haven't gotten your life back into order since your spouse passed away.

Helen: (Sarcastically) I haven't felt like it, have I?

Me: Well that was a snotty response to someone who is trying to help.

Helen: What do you expect? A big grin? I'm a widow.

Me: I thought we were here to work together on your problem, not start an arguing match over what's appropriate.

Helen: You're right. I'm sorry. I just get so angry about Harvey that I

take it out on anyone around me. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: Don't be sorry, just be motivated to do something positive about your situation.

Helen: You're right again. I should show some motivation besides my anger about him leaving me. (Fogging) He could have taken better care of himself earlier and maybe he wouldn't have died.

Me: Well my job here is to look at your negatives, not Harvey's. Even possible negatives. I do this because I can't read minds. I flunked that course. So I'm going to have to present even possible negatives for you to learn how to deal with. Okay with you if we cast a big net?

Helen: Do we have to? I mean, after all I've been through? Don't you think that's a bit too much. Don't you have any sensitivity at all?

Me: Do you act like this to everybody you meet?

Helen: I think I do. You're right. No wonder I haven't gotten out of my depressive rut and met new people. I guess I shut them off like I just tried to with you. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: So is that an okay to proceed, even though we have to do this crudely without finesse?

Helen: Sure, why not. Every one else does it. Why not you?

Me: You are confusing. Do you want this way of possibly handling your emotional problem or do what you already know how to do, just bitch at me and play the victim?

Helen: Sorry, I'm sure you are right. (Fogging) What I'm doing is a bad habit, and I guess I don't want to look at myself and how I screw things up.

Me: Do you want to give this a go?

Helen: Yes, definitely.

Me: Why are you so angry about Harvey? Did he commit suicide?

Helen: No, he died of pneumonia in a hospital after an auto accident. They're trying to say the accident was his fault so I can't collect damages. He died years before his life expectancy. I always told him to be more careful in driving. I should have drummed it into him. It was my fault. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: They say that people die of pneumonia nowadays only because they have Aids or give up because their life has been so miserable that they don't give a damn.

Helen: You're saying that he was miserable with me.

- Me: You got it. That's a definite possibility we have to look at.
- Helen: That's hard to take, but you are probably right. (Fogging) I didn't make his life very happy the last few years. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: It makes you sound like a harridan or a real bitch to live with.
- Helen: It does. (Fogging)
- Me: So?
- Helen: So I guess I was a bitch to live with. (Fogging)
- Me: So that made him doubly miserable. You and pneumonia together.
- Helen: I guess it did. (Fogging)
- Me: He probably didn't want to go back home, so he died.
- Helen: So it's my fault?
- Me: What do you think?
- Helen: I guess it could have been my fault. (Fogging) I didn't know that I was that bad. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: Does not knowing change anything?
- Helen: You're right. That I was dumb or didn't give a damn doesn't relieve me of my effect on Harvey. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: You are probably very depressed also.
- Helen: I am. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: You still think that your life with Harvey should still be going on?
- Helen: You are right. (Fogging)
- Me: And you refuse to change that viewpoint.
- Helen: I can't change it. When you are married for as long as we were, you love each other, even if one is dumb and the other is bitchy. It may not be romantic, but it's love. It's not supposed to be cut off in the middle of life.
- Me: So that's why you are not getting on with life? It does go on. You know that. No matter what happens.
- Helen: You're right, (Fogging) but I feel like I'm stuck where I am.
- Me: You are, on the outside of social things with other people.
- Helen: Again, you're right. (Fogging)
- Me: Do you want to get over this?
- Helen: I don't know. I'm just scared. I don't know what will happen. At least with Harvey, as much as he lacked, at least it was safe. I knew where I stood.
- Me: Do you want to be desensitized to that. The great social

unknown out there?

Helen: If I could, it would be wonderful.

Me: Let's try it.

Helen: Will it work?

Me: Has before.

Helen: Okay.

Me: You should go out to a party. Maybe with a friend.

Helen: Don't you think I'm a bit old for a party. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: Of course you are. That's what makes it just what you need.

Helen: I'd probably make an ass out of myself. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: Very likely. You need to make an ass out of yourself so you know from doing it that it means nothing.

Helen: But nobody will like me.

Me: Again very likely. But you need to experience that for the same reason. Who gives a damn? Do you think it's like a beauty pageant or popularity contest?

Helen: I guess I do. (Negative Self Assertion) Stupid, huh?

Me: Sounds like it to me. And if you meet a fellow who is interested in you, you will probably screw that up too.

Helen: I think you may be right about that. (Fogging)

Me: Again who cares? Do you think there is a bunch of social police out there keeping score on you?

Helen: I act like it, don't I? (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: You view this whole thing as if it is to get a replacement clone of Harvey, instead of just going out and meeting people and enjoying yourself.

Helen: Humm... I guess I do. (Fogging) I am silly without realizing it. I haven't thought about this seriously. I certainly haven't figured out what's best for me to do. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: No, you haven't thought about it at all. Just locked yourself away, and bitched at everyone.

Helen: You're right about that. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: You haven't met one guy just to have coffee with at work. Not even the Xerox paper salesman. Just to keep your hand in.

Helen: But there are so few decent single men out there.

Me: And if you met one, you would probably screw it up.

Helen: I probably would. (Fogging)

- Me: That's why you need to practice using your brains and social skills with some of the lemons rolling around out there — to see if you can make lemonade out of a couple of them. Then if you meet a really nice guy it won't be you who screws things up.
- Helen: Makes sense.
- Me: But you would probably screw up with the lemons, even though it was just practice.
- Helen: You're probably right, I would likely screw up with them. (Fogging)
- Me: And another thing...
- Helen: You're right, that too... (Fogging)

After several sessions of therapeutic dialogs like this one, Helen found the interest to let her friends know that she was available again and began to socialize in mixed company.

Learning To Live With Dragons as a psychological adult coping with the loss of ability and forced retirement

Sonny is a 43 year old ex-navy man who was retired on a medical discharge due to a service connected injury to his leg. The lower leg bone and ankle were shattered. He only retained his leg after he refused medical treatment when they were going to amputate his lower leg. He told the docs he would rather die than be an amputee. Oddly enough, he made the right call. After eight months of treatment and rehabilitation therapy, he could walk with a cane. After six months more of therapy, his leg showed no improvement so the navy discharged him. After the first six months of his retirement, he began to drink heavily, as he said, "to pass the time." Sonny developed a emotional difficulty after he sustained his injury that can be fitted to the etiology model of the psychological problem.

1) The change in his environment was the unforeseen injury which discharged him on medical retirement pay. In the navy, Sonny was a chief petty officer, a bosuns mate in charge of, as he put it, "the deck apes" who kept the ship running, clean, and in good repair. His injury was severe enough that he could not get an equivalent job in the civilian sector. Aside from his navy experience, he had no prior skills or training to step into a different civilian job.

2) His malfunctioning belief was that he could always count upon his

zeal and strength (he could have played in the NFL) to get a job done.

3) The environmental negatives were numerous. Most employers would have had difficulty in considering him for hire because of his injury, his negative, depressed attitude, and his drinking problem.

4) His personal negatives were many, starting with the fact that he was secretly drinking on board the ship when he had the accident which crippled his leg.

5) Sonny first denied that he had lost the normal, physical use of his leg. When his leg did not get any better, he withdrew generally from active life. He didn't sit in the back yard watching the grass grow, but used alcohol for that purpose.

Given this match with the etiology of a psychological problem, it made sense to try to desensitize him to his environmental and personal negatives in order to get him back into the general payoff environment, i.e., Defang The Dragon as substitute coping for the more primitive Remove Yourself from the Dragon. Although Sonny's psychological problem was caused by a loss of physical ability and he received an involuntary medical retirement, the factors in dealing with his retirement are the same as dealing with any retirement, even those caused by reaching a certain age. The key factor is still going from a restricted environment (work) to a drastically restricted environment wherein there is little structure leading to payoffs and very few payoffs.

Again, this dialog, like the others is a composite one, edited for confidentiality, brevity, interest and teaching purposes.

Verbal Behavior Therapy Dialog 27.

Coping with the environmental and personal negatives of loss of career through loss of a physical ability causing medical retirement.

Me: Have you been drinking yet today?

Sonny: No.

Me: If you do drink while we are doing this, its positive effect on you will likely be minimized. In short, probably a waste of your time and mine.

Sonny: No, you said don't drink and I haven't.

Me: You know why you drink, don't you.

- Sonny: Sure, to pass the time.
- Me: That's a rationalization to cover up the real reason.
- Sonny: Say what you want, I know why I drink.
- Me: I thought we were here to desensitize you to your negatives, not argue about them.
- Sonny: But what you said isn't true.
- Me: Who appointed you, Freud?
- Sonny: I can't agree with something that's just not true.
- Me: Nor can you agree with something negative that you don't want to look at.
- Sonny: You're just playing with words.
- Me: Perhaps, but what we're doing is no help to you at all. I thought you agreed to try this method with all your negatives, not only with the ones that don't make you uncomfortable.
- Sonny: You're saying that I'm dodging the truth.
- Me: I'm advising you with a "Maybe you are." You or I won't really know until you examine what I tell you thoroughly without avoiding the issue, or refusing to look at it.
- Sonny: So if it makes me uncomfortable, it may be true?
- Me: There's only one way to find out.
- Sonny: Okay. Let's try it again.
- Me: Saying you drink to pass the time is only a rationalization whereby you don't have to look at the real reason.
- Sonny: You may be right. (Fogging) But I don't know what the real reason is. I don't like this.
- Me: You don't have to. Go with it.
- Sonny: You're probably right. I should go with it. (Fogging)
- Me: You most likely drink as much as you do to avoid having to look at a problem.
- Sonny: I probably do. (Fogging) But I still don't know what the problem is. What is it?
- Me: You tell me. Make a guess. What's your biggest problem? What in your life now scares you the most?
- Sonny: Being booted out of the navy and not being worth a damn to anyone. I could never get a good job now. My life is just crap. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: Do you dwell on those thoughts often?
- Sonny: No, I don't like to think about that at all.
- Me: So what do you do instead, play basketball?

Sonny: No, I usually drink. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: Instead of thinking?

Sonny: Instead of thinking. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: So you do use drinking as a fancy withdrawal from the things out there that hurt?

Sonny: You may be right. (Fogging) I guess I do.

Me: Just like the guys who say they drink because they like the taste, and don't stop until they finish off a fifth in one binge. If what they say is true, I couldn't have some orange juice without finishing off the quart container, because I like the taste of orange juice.

Sonny: I don't drink that much. Maybe a pint. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: So now we know how you deny that what happened to you is important, and how you withdraw from facing the negatives of reality.

Sonny: So now what do I do?

Me: Right now, we practice getting rid of the negatives.

Sonny: Do you think it will work with me?

Me: It has before with others.

Sonny: Okay. let's go for it.

Me: With all the negative things about you, I doubt that anybody would hire you for dogcatcher.

Sonny: That's what I think too. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: Your leg is still a mess. I could call you gimpy, and not be far off.

Sonny: You're probably right there. (Fogging)

Me: That leg is your fault. Your stupidity did it.

Sonny: Boy, are you right about that. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: Because you are gutless deep inside and drink to cover it up, you screwed your life up.

Sonny: I am gutless, and I did screw myself up. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: Perhaps permanently.

Sonny: There's no doubt that it's permanent. The navy docs told me that several times.

Me: It seems that you believe everything you are told. You must have been a good little boy in school. How in the hell someone like you made Chief Bosuns Mate, I will never figure out.

- Sonny: It surprised me too. They just promoted me. I didn't think I was that good either. (Fogging)
- Me: You allow yourself to get drunk and do stupid things.
- Sonny: I certainly have done that. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: Your negative attitude about yourself and your abilities and your chances make you shoot yourself in the other foot every time you go for an interview.
- Sonny: That's for sure. So far they have expressed as much interest in me for any job as they would for a sixteen year old with a Mohawk haircut, leather jacket, tank top and jeans — even as a night watchman who only needs the brains of a slug to do the job. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: Your drinking shoots you down also.
- Sonny: I think it does too. (Fogging) I don't drink before the interview but I think I look like a drunk. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: The total package is, I don't think you can do any job but bosuns mate, and the navy doesn't want you anymore.
- Sonny: You may be right about what I can do. (Fogging) And the navy certainly doesn't want me anymore. (Negative Self Assertion) I think they can spot someone who has a tendency to be an alky. They have a lot of experience with them.
- Me: You must also have some personality disorder that shuts off your brain. Nobody could call you stupid, yet you limit your thinking to solve this problem.
- Sonny: I know I do dumb things. (Negative Self Assertion) But what are you talking about specifically?
- Me: Your problem is getting a job to make your life meaningful, not to earn a million bucks. You have a pension that takes care of your basic needs, right? Medical care, commissary privileges, etc.?
- Sonny: Yes, all those things, plus enough money to drink myself into a stupor every day, if I want. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: Why aren't you looking at starting a new career? How about school, volunteer activities? For example, have you ever thought about becoming an alcoholism counselor?
- Sonny: If I were smart, I should be doing something like that, shouldn't I? (Fogging) But I thought you really had to be smart to be a counselor.
- Me: Trust me, it is not a job requirement.

- Sonny: Do you think I could do it?
- Me: Only if you really wanted to.
- Sonny: So again, everything is up to me. (Fogging)
- Me: It always has been. What do you want to do?
- Sonny: Becoming a head person instead of a strong back is very appealing. Then my leg doesn't matter. But I don't know a lot of things, and that scares me. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: So what? We can desensitize you to anything that scares you. If that were not possible, we couldn't have lion tamers or snake charmers.
- Sonny: What else do I have to do for the rest of my life?
- Me: If you don't have a plan, you go nuts. With a plan, the rest is duck soup.
- Sonny: I would like to be desensitized to going to school and making an ass out of myself there.
- Me: No problem, one of our standard routines. Incidentally, do you know what group of students, demographically speaking, has the best track record in higher education?
- Sonny: Who?
- Me: Discharged military veterans like yourself who are motivated, lean and hungry.
- Sonny: Well, okie dokie! Let's do it.

Sonny did go back to school at the local JC and became a volunteer alcoholism counselor. As soon as he began to fill his life with activities, his depression and anger at himself, society in general, and especially the navy, remitted. Oddly enough, he found he had a natural aptitude for accounting classes and that made it possible for him to get a job either as a hull repair planner/estimator or bean counter in the naval shipyard in his home town. In short, he began to Learn To Live With Dragons as a more mature psychological adult.

Learning To Live With Dragons as a psychological adult in dealing with the loss of a life goal

Harry was a successful Hollywood movie and TV executive. I can assure you that you have seen some of his films and enjoyed them. Harry was successful in all that he did professionally. That was his problem. He hadn't made a movie for over three years. The reason he took this sabbatical from the movies was a chronic depression brought on by his

success. He had reached all of his youthful goals by the time he was forty, and began asking himself questions which successful people have asked themselves for the last twenty-five thousand years; "Is this it? Is this the meaning of life? That's all there is to it?" A few years ago, we used to call this problem a mid-life crisis. It occurred only with the successful and affluent because the little guys didn't have time to leisurely reflect upon their life and take such a silly question about "What is the meaning of life" seriously. They were too busy earning a living and taking care of themselves and those close to them.

Harry complained that he had lost all his goals that motivated him. After achieving them, he realized that the significance he previously imbued them with was nonsense. All he was doing was making a product that people enjoyed. Nothing more, nothing less. That was very hard to take, much in the same way that the engineer designing the new freeway link between Pasadena and Burbank suddenly goes into crisis when he realizes that he has spent half his life learning how to pave a road, and nothing more than that. He is not fulfilling a male imperative of Mother Nature, or a directive from heaven.

Until this wisdom appears, life-goal orientation is viewed by most males as a mandate from some higher agency, and can be taken to extremes before its silliness is realized. Then, sadly, the pendulum may often mistakenly swing to the other extreme with a rejection of the traditional male life goal orientation of career towards the traditional female one of relationships. We see a comic model of this in the behavior of the professor of European History who, specializing in Venice during the period of March 15th through April 1st, 1432, realizes his folly, divorces his wife, and takes one of his bouncy students with him to Tahiti for a practicum in relationshiping prior to becoming a lecturer to Parents Without Partners.

The loss of life goals also fits well with the model of the etiology of the psychological problem, as we can see for Harry's situation:

1. With respect to payoff environment change, for most of the first forty years of his life, Harry ordered and restricted his life to those things which would lead to his being a success in film making in Hollywood. When he achieved his goals, including being able to indulge in all the little payoffs that affluence allows, these payoffs were no longer positive or meaningful as a reward for his work or interest. His common response to all the things which you and I, and himself earlier, would have thought pretty nifty, was, "Been there, done that." In psychological terms which

have now become quite familiar to us, he experienced a change from a restricted environment — do only that which leads to success and you will get a lot of goodies — to a very restricted environment — do nothing because there are now very few payoffs that interest you.

2. With respect to his belief(s) which this environmental change caused to malfunction, his belief that hard work and dedication would lead to a happy life no longer predicted what he should do to be happy.

3. With respect to the environmental negatives revealed by this change, he developed a distaste for his own work because it was, in his view, worthless.

4. With respect to the personal negatives revealed by this change, he was terrified that his whole value system which prompted many self-sacrifices to produce his films, indicated that he was first a fool, sacrificing his life for nothing, and second that he must be a simpleton for not being interested in something with value which did not tarnish when attained.

5. Although Harry did not deny there was a problem, he still withdrew from the payoff environment wherein the problem lay, film making.

Oddly enough, I have known a couple of Hollywood producers who have encountered this psychological problem of loss of values, ideals and goals. One has been so depressed — after being successful enough to assure the well-being and affluence of his great grandchildren — that he refuses to treat a serious medical condition. This is when a psychological problem is not minor, trivial or humorous, but deadly.

Because Harry's problem fitted the etiology model of the psychological problem, it made sense that to get him to stop withdrawing from what had been the most important part of his life, film making, i.e., Remove Yourself from the Dragon coping. Desensitization of the environmental and personal negatives about film making, Defang The Dragon coping, might do the trick and get him to expand his environment and get back to work, albeit with different payoffs than before.

Like all of the teaching dialogs, the following one about loss of goals and values is a composite one, not limited to Hollywood producers, and is edited for confidentiality, brevity, interest and teaching purposes.

Verbal Behavior Therapy Dialog 28.**Learning to cope with the environmental and personal negatives of loss of a life goal.**

- Me: So you understand what we are trying to do and why?
- Harry: What yes. But trying to get me interested in film making again is beating a dead horse.
- Me: Not to generate interest, but to set up conditions to make sure you are none of the following: turned off, afraid, disgusted, repulsed, upset, disdainful, etc., by film making.
- Harry: You're saying that I will return to films if we get rid of the negatives?
- Me: Very likely, since you are the one who has imbued them with negatives that didn't exist before. Would you like to feel less upset about your past work and the professional track you have chosen in life?
- Harry: Sure, but that won't make me go back to it.
- Me: That's an empirical question which will be answered by experience, not belief or theory.
- Harry: So wait and see?
- Me: You got it Harry.
- Harry: Okay, let's try it.
- Me: As I explained before, I don't know everything about you, so I will have to load my psychological shotgun with all possible negatives, some of which hit your nail right on the head, some of which don't.
- Harry: Fine with me.
- Me: You are pretty cautious. If this is any indication, you want everything explained to you before you will commit to some thing.
- Harry: I guess that's true. (Fogging)
- Me: I don't think you were like that always. You couldn't have been, or you would have never gotten a film out of the starting gate.
- Harry: That's true. I seem to have lost my self confidence that I could pull anything off. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: You mean producers are like lawyers? After they jump off a fifty story building, they figure out how to get out of the predicament on the way down?
- Harry: Close. I used to be like that, and I probably have lost it. (Negative Self Assertion).

- Me: More likely, you never had it to start. Your films were probably just trash to begin with and you were surrounded by yes men. Probably just Hollywood hype.
- Harry: Wait a minute. You can't say that without some comment. Two of my specials were up for Emmys and one feature film was nominated at Cannes.
- Me: A bit upset, huh?
- Harry: No, but I thought I had to let you know the truth.
- Me: Forgot how to Fog?
- Harry: No, you were distorting the truth.
- Me: Got a bit defensive, don't you think?
- Harry: No.
- Me: Really?
- Harry: No.
- Me: Do you think it's appropriate to BS me who is a) trying to help you and b) can read you like a book.
- Harry: But I wasn't trying to BS you. My work was recognized by others in the industry.
- Me: No wonder you are a Hollywood producer. You are as slippery as a bucket of eels. There's no point to this. I'm not an actor or writer or director you are trying to sign for less than scale. I'm trying to help you get out of the mess you are in, and you fight what we agreed to set out to accomplish.
- Harry: (Thoughtfully) You're absolutely right. (Fogging) I am fighting you, and I don't know why. I got very defensive and I don't know why I did that either. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: That's a lot better.
- Harry: Thanks.
- Me: Dumb response. You are not using your noggin here, just your gut. You have to be your own judge of everything you do. Not let me do that for you.
- Harry: You're right again. (Fogging) Stupid of me actually. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: You handled that perfectly.
- Harry: (Stopping for a second and grinning.) You're right. I did handle that perfectly. (Fogging)
- Me: Stop grinning and let's get on with this.
- Harry: (With an ear to ear grin.) You're right, I should stop grinning and get on with it. (Fogging)

- Me: Your films were very likely crap to begin with.
- Harry: They probably were. (Fogging)
- Me: So you discovered nothing when you became disappointed with your accomplishments.
- Harry: You're right. I probably was in love with myself and got only what I deserved. (Fogging)
- Me: You do this better than I do.
- Harry: You're right. I do. (Fogging)
- Me: So give me the next line in this scene.
- Harry: I was looking at the hoopla, not the product. I wanted the hoopla, not to produce something significant and lasting. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: You're probably right. (Fogging)
- Harry: I know I'm right. (Fogging)
- Me: Which means?
- Harry: I've been acting like a kid instead of an adult who should be able to assess himself and his own work. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: I doubt if you could go back to working in films even though it's the only job you do well.
- Harry: Why?
- Me: You would probably screw it up because of your saying everything was crap. Nothing would matter anymore. That does not sell film in Hollywood.
- Harry: You're probably right. It wouldn't matter as much, and maybe that's a good thing. (Fogging)
- Me: Talk is cheap. Just saying that doesn't get the job done.
- Harry: Probably. (Fogging)
- Me: You could have done this yourself. You really didn't need me.
- Harry: How?
- Me: Just tough it out. Stay within the film making environment and take your lumps. If you did that, no depression. As they say, "No free lunch."
- Harry: I probably could have done that. (Fogging)
- Me: On second thought, I don't think you could have. I don't think you have the cojones.
- Harry: Maybe not. (Fogging) But if I had, I wouldn't have been in the mess I am now. (Negative Self Assertion)
- Me: True, but it takes a real gutsy person to do that on a hunch that

if you get thrown off a horse, you don't run, but get back up on, as soon as possible.

Harry: You're right. I probably don't have that type of courage. (Fogging) I certainly don't have that much confidence in my self as my running from trouble indicates. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: Yet, aside from a little petulance before, we are dealing with the same negatives you would have to face if you went back. A realistic assessment of your work and yourself, and whether or not you have to maturity, courage and stamina to be a film person again. Maybe you should just select scripts for someone else and not have the full responsibility. Maybe you are not up to it.

Harry: Maybe I'm not. (Fogging) What other negatives should we cover?

Me: You tell me.

Harry: I would look like an ass going back now after everybody saw how depressed I was three years ago. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: You may be right. (Fogging) What else?

Harry: The money people might ask me to see a psychologist for an evaluation before they would finance. (Negative Self Assertion)

Me: You're right. (Fogging) I certainly would if it were my money. Who knows how nutso you were and still are?

Harry: Damn, this isn't easy even though it's practice.

Me: Your mid-brain doesn't know the difference between practice and the real thing. That's why this works.

Harry: It's still hard.

Me: If it were easy, everyone would have done it already. Would you rather have electroshock therapy for depression? They are still doing that. Or a prefrontal lobotomy. Ken Keasy, Michael Douglas and Jack Nicholson came up with an Oscar winner with that procedure in *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest*.

Harry: Don't I wish.

Me: What was that I just heard?

Harry: Let's practice some more.

As it turned out, requiring Harry to come up with the negatives proved very productive, since a) he knew them, but didn't want to deal with them, and b) this gave him an intellectual task concerning the anxious

material; like having to make a scientific study of snakes to get over one's fear of them (OR therapy, Chapter Four.) After more practice, Harry's SUDs level was effectively zero for things about the Hollywood film industry environment and his personal negatives in dealing with his poor response in acquiring new goals when old ones wear out. Soon after, Harry started making courtesy visits to lots and sets to let people know he was back; he had Learned To Live With Dragons including the notion that one's work may not be mandated as important by Heaven .

Now let's turn to the next chapter to look at resolving the conflict of belief and environment when we have a psychological problem, pointing out how we all have been indoctrinated since childhood on how to live, how this indoctrination process goes on today, and how most of us believe we are thinking when we are only believing.

Chapter Ten

All The Sacred Cows Are Dead So Stop Believing And Start Thinking

Ask not God for direction, but for eyes with which to see

Anon

Let me tell you about Ada Hanna. When I was a child, there were no self-help books, but I did have a grandmother who had no hesitation to butt into grandson's business and teach him how to think for himself. Grandma Ada was an interesting storyteller and her stories had a purpose and a moral.

Once, after my father had told me, in no uncertain terms, all that anyone needed to know about religion, Grandma Ada gave me a lesson on absolutism of religious beliefs. She related to me a "discussion" she had with the head theologian at her religious school in Washington, DC near the turn of the century when she was about twelve. This Episcopal priest was arguing in class that Jesus was so perfect that it was impossible for him to commit a sin. Grandma Ada raised her hand and told the priest that he was presenting a specious argument with no merit, was self-defeating, not properly thought out, and insulted the intelligence of God, as well as anyone else with any brains. After the priest got over his apoplexy, he demanded she retract that statement and apologize to him. Grandma Ada retorted that, to the contrary, he should apologize for using an argument that presented Jesus as a moral nitwit who had no choice in the matter to sin or not; like locking someone in a room with no windows or doors and then bragging how good the person was for not leaving. The priest tried to get Grandma Ada to back down or be expelled by pulling rank, but the poor fellow didn't have enough acumen to know with whom he was dealing.

It became clear to me over the years that Grandma Ada was never intimidated by anyone, anyone's argument, or anyone's beliefs. Although she was always a lady and would be shocked to hear me say it, in today's less polite speech, she had the female equivalent of the balls of a brass monkey.

She was taught to think for herself. How did this happen? Probably because she was the niece of Mark Hanna, the Republican Senate leader back then, and a youthful friend of Teddy Roosevelt's daughter, Alice. They used to play on the White House lawn together, and from what Grandma Ada told me, I gather they took no lip from anyone but Uncle Mark and Teddy themselves. They were very successful in doing whatever young ladies wanted to do then, with their wheedling charm backed up by intelligent minds that could not be intimidated. Because of that charm and intelligence, they learned that "No" really meant "No" only when given directly to them by these, two of the then, most powerful men on earth. That kind of experience would certainly reinforce thinking for them and allow seeing through the unique lenses of power surrounding them that there are no sacred cows. I think that was what Grandma Ada tried to pass on to me with her stories and tales of that time when her family helped run this country. That is what I am trying to show you in this chapter; there are no sacred cows, especially with respect to the beliefs in which you have been indoctrinated, and have not as yet been thought through. I am going to help you see that there are no sacred cows, not as Grandma Ada did looking through elite political eyes, but with a universally available instrument; common sense observation with your own God given eyes, of what surrounds you.

**Two ways of looking at the beliefs which run our lives —
As imperatives which must be obeyed — Or —
As functional, practical, psychological programming that
gets changed when things go wrong**

Why is this story about Grandma Ada learning to see there are no sacred cows important? Because if you want to prevent psychological problems from happening to you in the future, you need, and here I am not exaggerating or being grandiose — to be educated — not indoctrinated, about how you operate according to your beliefs. You need to Learn How To Live With Dragons, an expanded payoff environment, and knowing how to examine your beliefs — in detail, if necessary — is part of that psychological adult coping style.

We seem to be so emotionally wedded to the beliefs we acquire as we make our way through life that I seriously considered entitling this part, "Something To Piss Off Everybody." This is analogous to the reaction I received from many of my colleagues twenty-five years ago

when I first proposed that, to become assertive, one first had to become one's own ultimate judge of the appropriateness of one's own behavior, thoughts and emotions and not automatically surrender that function to anyone else. They were astounded that anyone could suggest that one's clients adopt such an independent, even arrogant, demeanor. Now-a-days, a quarter century later, that idea is taken as a given; a reasonable, rational starting point in teaching self-assurance and assertion. Similarly, this chapter is proposing something that is likely to be initially viewed, perhaps with alarm as before, as a radical departure from today's accepted norm; gaining the skill and objective perspective to think through any belief, not only troublesome ones, to the point where belief examination is a routine, dispassionate exercise.

This unemotional, thinking viewpoint, indeed, is that there are no sacred cows, for our untestable beliefs are only a set of preprogrammed, learned guidelines for the automatic operation of our midbrain complex. This is the lower third of our higher functioning cortex wrapped around our true midbrain, the total of which is also called the limbic system. This is the part of our brain, which does not think, but automatically interacts with our payoff environment to maximize our successes and minimize our failures. It also is called our emotional brain, as it regulates and controls our emotional states. Our very efficient midbrain (in addition to our thinking cortex) is the reason we humans rule this planet and are now looking towards the stars for new worlds to explore and conquer. It handles our routine business while our thinking cortex is the troubleshooter, the initiator of new ideas, the problem solver, the creator of new and worthwhile human efforts. Our midbrain complex handles our everyday routine business by automatically operating on 1) learned or indoctrinated preprogrammed beliefs used as guidelines on what to do to be successful in a known, restricted environment, or 2) factual information provided by the thinking cortex in either a restricted or expanded environment, or 3) trial and error in an expanded environment when there is no belief that can be used as a behavioral prompt. As you can see from this rough schematic of brain operation, all one need do to avoid an emotional problem becoming chronic when our environment changes significantly, is to modify or exchange our malfunctioning belief for one which better fits the changed environment. A common sense approach.

Gaining skill to appraise a belief as a guideline and not an imperative set down in Heaven, or by some other authority, requires we recognize a characteristic of our beliefs. They are only labels for a set of automatic

behavior patterns. They program us on how to behave within a specific restricted environment. If asked what we automatically do in such a situation, our common response is to give an explanation of a paragraph (optimally) or two and then blank out on more information. What we actually do can be specified typically, only by painstakingly going through each situation and asking what one believes should be done therein. Much of traditional talk psychotherapy is consumed with this detailing of beliefs to demonstrate how we often do foolish, irrational things without knowing why.

Given this schematic on analyzing our beliefs, there are three things to do when a potential psychological problem develops and you keep experiencing failure when your belief tells you what should happen, but doesn't.

- 1) The first thing to do is to make a judgment of whether you are working from fact, or belief. We will go into some detail later on how to assess the most probable of the two in an objective way.
- 2) The second thing to do is to learn why we do not change our beliefs almost under any circumstance. What we do is to substitute other, overall metabeliefs about our beliefs — “It’s only natural..., Everybody always does it that way...,” etc. — in place of the critical, problem solving thinking needed to analyze our painful situation. We need to learn to recognize these metabeliefs which justify our everyday beliefs as just beliefs themselves, not laws or facts.
- 3) The third thing to do, and this is key to preventing a psychological problem, is, in vivo, as you live your day by day life, to examine all your automatic behavior in that troubled situation until the situation is resolved. When you do this, you immediately transform a potential psychological problem into a problem of living. It will be messy, unpleasant, not easy and full of negatives — there is no way to get away from them in life — but it will be simpler because you will not be acting from belief taken as an imperative, but upon thought. But before this can be done in any situation wherein you may have a potential psychological problem, you have to know if you are operating upon fact or belief. You also have to know how you — like the rest of us — disguise your beliefs as if they were facts to keep from questioning them when they work for us in good times. This disguise, unfortunately, automatically sets us to flogging a psychological dead horse, so to speak, during bad times when trying to resolve a problem.

This analysis of the factors involved in assessing one's beliefs leads

to how you can immediately judge if you are operating on the basis of a belief, or facts organized into a problem-solving plan by thinking. The reason this is necessary is that education, in our case, psychoeducation, teaches you how to look at yourself and your situation without the need to rely on beliefs. It teaches you to evaluate and analyze your beliefs, even operate comfortably without them — not worship them. In furthering your knowledge of beliefs, I will cover things with a broad brush simply to make your understanding as comprehensive as possible. That means you and I will look at belief examples that have no direct connection to psychological problems to gain a general understanding of belief phenomena. To do so, I am going to give you a set of short essays on the folly of beliefs taken as facts, which lock you out from simple, practical solutions to our problems.

To accomplish the goal of maximizing all the psychological leverage we can bring to bear in preventing future psychological problems, we have to look at three of our human factors:

- 1) What is thinking?
- 2) What are beliefs?
- 3) How have we been culturally indoctrinated since childhood in certain overall beliefs — metabeliefs — which stop us from immediately seeing — thinking about — our everyday beliefs for what they are; just guidelines, not mandates we have to obey without question.

So let's start this psychoeducational experience with looking at what thinking is.

Human Factor 1 — What is thinking?

There are all sorts of thinking; classifying and sorting things, recall and memory, planning and making predictions, reasoning, problem solving, abstract creative thinking, and making decisions and judgments, to name just some. The type of thinking needed in resolving psychological problems, and which, mid-brain belief programming takes the place of by default, is problem solving thinking, and making judgments. So when I refer to thinking, I'm talking about judgments involving problem solving thinking. The thinking involved in making judgments is the major subject of this chapter. It is something we usually do not do unless we have to, because operating on mid-brain preprogrammed autopilot is much easier if things are working well. Oddly enough, we are so efficient that we do not need to think when things and times are routine. But when things do not work well, then we need an answer to the question of, what

are our beliefs?

Human Factor 2 — What are beliefs?

Our beliefs have two parts; each has a premise and a consequence. With respect to the premise of a belief, it is especially important to look at those of our beliefs which are basically judgment calls or beliefs with an untestable premise. For example, if I say I believe the stock market will go up tomorrow, all I need do to test that belief's validity is to wait and read tomorrow's newspaper. That kind of belief is not what causes us trouble. If you believe, however, that your spouse loves you, you have no real, concrete way of testing that belief premise. They don't publish a list of who really loves whom in the newspaper every day. Instead, you have to make a judgment call based upon your total experience with your spouse on whether or not he or she loves you.

With respect to a belief's consequence, there is always an unspoken "Therefore I should ... " at the end of every belief, such as, "I am a good _____", therefore I should... (* Alternatives: person, spouse, parent, son, daughter, teacher, fireman, housewife, house painter, fashion model, CIA agent, etc.) Our untestable beliefs are basic pre-programming for our mid-brain's automatic interaction with our payoff environment. In fact, our belief, as we state it, is only a shorthand label for how we should behave in a particular situation to be successful there. The "therefore I should ..." part of our belief is usually un verbalized by us, but in spite of being un verbalized, it still automatically programs our mid-brain operation. These beliefs, which tell our automatic mid-brain what to do, range from our simplistic belief on how to cross a busy office — keep to the right and avoid all chairs, desks, wastepaper baskets, delivery boys, until you get to the other side — to the quite sophisticated belief of how to get along with someone who loves you. An analogy of being unable to verbalize — except superficially — how you behave automatically towards a spouse who loves you, for example, is like being unable to verbalize — except very superficially — how to ride a bicycle, at the mid-brain level. We can't verbalize — tell someone — how we do this in detail, but we are automatically successful in doing it, time after time. As we shall see, the premise of a belief is relatively unimportant, while its consequence in prompting of our automatic, non-thought-out behaviors is much more significant to us. This premise vs. consequence analysis of beliefs applies to making sense of all sorts of indoctrinated, programmatic beliefs, ranging from those on male and female "nature" to ones like "Democracy

is everyone's birthright."

As we can see in the following statement describing the Environmental Law Of Beliefs, derived from the Environmental Law Of Behavior, our beliefs are created through trial and error, or indoctrination, to prompt us what to do within any one restricted payoff environment.

The fifth sub-law — *see pgs 259*

The Environmental Law of Beliefs

Beliefs are only a verbal label of the preprogramming for automatic operation of the mid-brain. Beliefs, therefore, are always a product of a restricted environment, which reinforces routine behaviors, having nothing to do with thoughtful planning or coping. When the environment expands, old beliefs typically do not predict the best way to successfully operate in that expanded environment.

Beliefs are only valid in the particular restricted environment, which generated them. If there develops an environmental expansion, a new environmental niche — a new set of payoffs — a new belief, prompting behaviors which attend to those payoffs, will develop over time. If the environment becomes more restricted, the belief will change to predict the payoffs remaining within that newly restricted environment. The rational for the belief is unimportant. No belief is ruled out, no matter how illogical, as beliefs are only verbal labels of the preprogramming necessary for the automatic midbrain to follow in prompting reinforced behaviors in that environment. Beliefs are only useful for a restricted environment since they are developed to predict that environment. If the environment expands, beliefs are no longer accurate and thinking is required.

How do we get our beliefs?

To understand how the Environmental Law of Beliefs affects us, we can look back at Mel's and my experience with our clinical professor in reinforcing his lecturing behavior (in Chapter Two.) If we had kept up our conditioning of him for a long period of time, eventually he would have come up with some verbal explanation or belief on how to lecture in that dreadfully dull and restricted class payoff environment; i.e., "The students in that class seem to be either sleep deprived or brain dead. To maximize the learning experience, you must lecture only to those who

show signs of life.”

As our professor's hypothetical belief indicates, our beliefs are learned to aid us in coping with any particular restricted payoff environment. A belief is generated as a verbalization of a trial and error learning sequence. Once that belief is formed, it is used as social indoctrination material on how to train others to operate within that extremely restricted slice of the social culture.

You get most of your beliefs from social indoctrination. As we can see if we only look around us and at our own experiences, the vast majority of what we learn, morally and otherwise, we have learned through indoctrination. The reason indoctrination is so widely used is because it is the most primitive — simplest and most efficient — method of training a person to do something. In so looking at ourselves, we can see the difference between indoctrination, according to its specific characteristics, compared to education. I make a point of this because, while we know that most of your indoctrination in beliefs happened while you were young, today other people and groups are still trying to indoctrinate — not educate — you in their causes and ways of believing. If you believe in place of thinking, yet, are unaware of this substitution, it is not likely you will respond to this present day indoctrination attempt by thinking about it. It is more likely you will automatically respond with that which you have been indoctrinated in before; your own beliefs. Unfortunately, that will be a somewhat less than formidable response. If you do not know how to distinguish between indoctrination and education, there is little you can do about being indoctrinated, and will likely finish up either a) supporting these causes because you believe you have to, even though feeling ambivalent, or outright negative, to them, or b) finding yourself fighting them, even though you would rather not be bothered or involved, as your only other option to joining them. Happily, though, this chapter is a two-for-one deal. While you learn, 1) how to recognize the characteristics of indoctrination as a sign of believing vs. thinking, you also learn, 2) how to recognize the same characteristics to know when someone is trying to indoctrinate you as an adult. With this information, you can see if you are operating on the basis of your beliefs instead of unbiased, problem solving thought needed to fix a psychological problem.

This chapter is about using thought instead of belief to prevent psychological problems. It is also about making you aware of things in which you have been indoctrinated about yourself and your beliefs. With this in mind, let's examine a set of common sense observations on no

nonsense thinking, which can be helpful in making sense of statements, claims, hypotheses, beliefs, etc. — about yourself, or anything else, which can be used to prevent potential future psychological problems from developing.

Some common sense observations on critical thinking helpful in making realistic judgments

The following observations are those which you can make that are part of the nuts and bolts of thinking instead of believing. Remember, making judgments does not mean you need to have definite proof of anything. If, for example, you had proof that A is not C, but A is definitely B, you would have no judgment to make. Anybody and everybody could see what was what, with no judgment required. Unfortunately, we don't have readily available proofs in much of life. Therefore, we more often need to make judgments about the probability of what is likely and what is not, without having any formal proof to back up our judgment. (This, incidentally, is the working definition of assertiveness.) Here we are presently concerned with being able to make a judgment on whether someone, including you, is operating on belief vs. fact. So when thinking about the following observations you can make to help your judgments, keep in mind that these observations are about how to estimate the probability that a claim someone makes to you is a belief or a fact, not a proof that someone is believing or operating on fact. This ability to make a critical thinking judgment about yourself is the key factor in you analyzing some situation that goes wrong in the future, and finding a solution for it that works.

Making common sense judgments — Based on operational definitions

This observation is a simple one. It asks how well the operative idea in someone's claim is defined. If the claim is about green cheese, how can we operationally — by what we do — check out green cheese to see if it is green cheese? What do we look for? Is a green color enough? Does the cheese have to come from Greenland? Or if the claim is about lesbianism, how can we operationally check out what someone does to see if it is lesbian behavior? What is the list of things we can look for that defines lesbianism? If no operational definition is given for the key

idea or concept in the claim, then the claim cannot be operationally checked out, either by yourself or the person who made the claim. If that is the result of asking questions about operational definitions, then you can make the judgment that the claim is very likely a belief, rather than fact.

Making common sense judgments — based on exceptional cases

This observation is on the claim that many things are universal, invariable, affect everyone, or occur only in a particular way. My youthful assumption about the universal lack of interest in sex of middle class teenage girls is an example. To make this observation on exceptional cases, you can then ask the question; is there one exception to the way we assume all teenyboppers behave sexually? Or an exception to any other pattern we assume to be universal? If there is one exceptional case, can you find two? Three? Five? Ten? Twenty? If there are exceptions to the claim or assumption, then you can comfortably judge you are probably checking out a belief, not a law, and thinking is required when that routine assumption or belief fails. If someone claims universality about anything, the more exceptions you can find, the greater the confidence you can have in making a judgment that the person is more likely believing instead of relying on factual evidence.

Making common sense judgments — based on contradictory evidence

This observation is similar to that on exceptional cases that indicates universality is not an accurate label to use in describing some human phenomenon. In making a common sense observation on contradictory evidence, if you find a number of contradictions to a claim which a person or group makes to you, you can make the judgment that the claim they make is more likely belief than fact. For example, we all subscribe to the saying, what goes up must come down. Nevertheless, there are many examples of contradictory evidence to that claim. The albatross does not come down unless it wants to. Anything going up at the speed of 18,000 mph will never come down, and if the thing going up is much bigger than the thing staying down, the thing staying down will have no choice but to go up also. The more contradictory evidence you find, the

more likely is that claim to be belief than fact or scientific principle.

Making common sense judgments — based on historical contradictions

This observation is a variant of the last observation. Instead of assessing the likelihood of the universality of a claim, "Everybody does (or knows) that," it looks at the eternality of a claim; i.e., "It's always been that way." If recorded history — which most of us know very little about aside from what we were indoctrinated to believe — provides us with a number of contradictions to a claim of eternality, then you can make the judgment that a claim of eternality is more likely a belief instead of a product of thoughtful review of the facts. For example, with respect to my assumption that female, middle class teenage asexuality was something built in, you can make a pre-Victorian era historical observation on contradictory teen age sexual behavior patterns; most teenage girls were living with someone and rearing families then. The more contradictory historical observations you can make, the more likely it is that my assumption about the innate source of female teenage sexuality is a belief rather than fact.

Making common sense judgments — based on practicality.

This observation deserves your attention most of all. It is one that notes — if it would not be practical for you to check out person A's claim on how things operate, then it would not be practical for person A to check it out either. Therefore, person A is very likely believing rather than acting on fact. In critically evaluating any information, ask yourself how practical it would be for anyone, even the most sophisticated of us, to generate the study, lab research, measurements, etc., needed to prove a claim (theory, hypothesis, belief, etc.) we have just been given. For example, one hundred years ago, we could critically judge the old saying that the moon was made of green cheese by making an observation on practicality. We could ask how easy or very difficult it would be to check out what the moon was made of then. Since we didn't have the ability to travel to the moon until 1969, it would have been very difficult before that to absolutely test out the green cheese statement. We could have indirect arguments, but no directly observable, first hand, evidence.

So how did the people making the claim that the moon was green cheese come to that conclusion if none of us could test it out? The observation on practicality, therefore, tells us that the green cheese claim most likely would have been just an untestable belief.

In a less simple example, but one just as straightforward in judging, suppose the claim concerns the sex life of female sea gulls who nest together when males are in short supply. This claim about "lesbian" sea gulls is used to justify a belief that human lesbianism is therefore genetic and "natural." (See metabelief V., about what is natural.) To make a judgment about how likely is this claim to be factual, you have to ask yourself, "How practical (easy or difficult) would it be to determine if these female gulls were really "lesbian?" Putting aside any sexual DNA evidence for the moment, what man or woman power and equipment would be required to constantly observe the gulls twenty four hours a day during the entire mating season? Could we even do that? Would one or both gulls fly away from the nest to fish and perhaps cop a quickie with a stray male up the coast? How could we practically distinguish the "lesbian" gulls from heterosexual gulls so we could observe them while flying around in a great pack of several hundred while fishing or doing anything else? Could anyone muster the practical resources necessary to successfully argue that the behaviors of these sea gulls are really homosexual? Is even asking a question about animal homosexuality something that can be practically answered? Here, I'm asking a number of questions, which would be very difficult to answer. In short, would this classical type data collection be a practical proposition? If it would be difficult or impractical for you or I to check out this claim about lesbian gulls, then it would be just as impractical for those who claim it to be factual. Therefore, you can make the judgment that it has a higher probability of being something the claimants want to believe, than a reality based statement.

Like now being able to land on the moon to see first hand if it is made of green cheese, we are also now able to do a more sophisticated analysis of animal gender with DNA tests. With respect to DNA analysis of the "lesbian" gulls, it turned out that they did have unusual patterns of male/female genes. This finding, however, did not tell how the gulls got this way. Was this an example of nature turning out lesbian gulls, which the believers in lesbianism claimed, or the result of something else which really had nothing to do with "natural" process?

As things happened, after the DDT poisoning of California pelicans,

the federal Environmental Protection Agency became interested in this aberrant gull behavior phenomenon since birds are genetically sensitive to environmental toxins. After their tests, it was found that the male/female genes of the lesbian gulls were mutated because of exposure of their parents — and themselves — to nearby illegal toxic dumps. In short, the critical common sense question then becomes, would it be a practical proposition to look for some "lesbian" sea gulls, anywhere, who were not exposed to environmental toxins, therefore, whose sexuality would be a result of "natural" process? If you couldn't do this, then it is very likely neither could those who believed the phenomenon to be part of Mother Nature's grand design. With this common sense observation of practicality on either level, grossly behavioral, or biogenetic, the claims of those who see lesbianism in sea gulls can be judged as probably more a wished for belief, than a factual result of natural processes.

As you can see from this example, making an observation on practicality can be part of your evaluative judgment of any statement, claim or information given to you. If the claim is relatively easy to check out, it probably has some factual basis. If it is quite difficult to test, then it is more likely a belief.

Making common sense judgments based on values

This observation is so simple, we usually overlook it in trying to objectify a statement or claim. All you need do is to observe if a claim has any value judgments attached to it. If the person or group making the claim argues that its end result meets some value criterion, such as bad or good, better or worse, superior or inferior, you can ask the question, "How can I, myself, objectify standards on good and bad? My opinions are subjective, always relate to me, and are not always simple and clear cut; i.e., I value ice cream as terrific, yet it is something that can also contribute to heart disease." If you honestly find you have difficulty in objectively dealing with a value claim, then I can guarantee so will the person or group making the claim. Values are subjective opinions. They are not factual. Therefore, you can make the thinking judgment that the people who make this type of claim very likely want to believe what they are telling you, rather than think about it. If they want you to believe along with them, they are trying to indoctrinate instead of educate you.

Making common sense judgments — based on payoff or motivation

This observation, on the motivation or payoff for a person (or group) making a claim, in addition to the outcomes of the preceding observations, can give a good account of whether the claim made is likely belief or fact. If, indeed, as in the above example of lesbian gulls, the person or group comes right out and states that there is a payoff for them — they are not neutral observers — and their motivation is to demonstrate that lesbianism is the choice of discriminating sea gulls, it makes more sense to judge — along with your other observations — that they want to believe, rather than base their claim on fact.

Human Factor 3 — Why we believe much more than we think — Our indoctrinated metabeliefs — Which transform our everyday beliefs from simple guidelines into mandates which must be obeyed.

You can see the need for some justification for our beliefs if you examine what the Environmental Law of Beliefs states. Each of your beliefs with an untestable premise is generated by a particular restricted payoff environment, and applies only to the payoffs in that particular environment. According to that law, your untestable beliefs are not heaven sent, and are devoid of any great meaning. Because we don't want to look like idiots whenever anyone, even ourselves, question the premise of one of our untestable beliefs, we need something to back it up. So we resort to one or more of our indoctrinated metabeliefs. Our metabeliefs justify our everyday beliefs by changing them from useful guidelines to the equivalent of fact, common knowledge, natural law, higher principle, human destiny, even morals and religious dogma. We assume these different metabeliefs we use to explain our belief are reasons for its validity, but they are not, simply because all we are saying with different words is "I believe," i.e., everybody knows that! It's only human nature! That's fact! If we didn't try to progress, what would happen to us? It's only natural! It's God's truth! We all do it! It's always been that way! What kind of person wouldn't do it like this?

I point out the most common metabeliefs we all resort to in justifying and fixating our beliefs using the following teaching device:

An Environmental Bill Of Belief Observations

You have the ability to think about and judge anything in your particular environment, including a belief, for what it is, a small slice of total reality, which may, or may not, be representative of total reality and the greater human environment. With that goal of using critical thinking in mind, let's look at the most useful psychological observation, and its opposing metabelief; that your beliefs have to be based upon truth.

Observation I: Truth

To be useful your beliefs need not be true

You do not need your beliefs be true, but that they only be valid in the reality of your present environment. If the premise of your belief is not true, it still has great value to you if it prompts you how to interact successfully with your restricted environment. Your beliefs only need be a schematic on how to do things in the particular restricted environment and time in which you now live, and not reflect some eternal truth. What is so important about this observation — as well as those that follow — is that if your beliefs do not have to be true, then they are indeed utilities, tools, artifices, — replaceables — things that can be changed when they are no longer needed or apply to the situation at hand.

We also have a metabelief which contradicts the observation that our beliefs do not have to be true to be useful. You can also use any insistence that you feel things must be true to be useful as an indication that you are believing in place of problem solving. This is what Fogging taught you to deal with in the past six chapters; truth is only probability, not certainty. This metabelief, which claims our beliefs must be true, says approximately:

Metabelief I. Your beliefs are based upon truth

Your beliefs, to be useful, must be in touch with truth, since higher reality is ultimate and absolute truth, and makes everything work. Since your beliefs work for you, they have to be true. The intelligent person, to be rational, knows he or she must behave according to these beliefs, since, by definition, beliefs coming from higher reality must be true.

You probably believe, as this metabelief prompts you to do, that your

beliefs are worthwhile information passed on to you because they are true. Contrary to what this metabelief tells you, the premise of your beliefs need not be true, and you can judge them on other things; do they accurately predict what you should do to be successful in the particular restricted environment in which they are used? For example, in Western Europe of the middle ages up to the sixteenth century, common sailors had the belief that the world was flat and you shouldn't sail too far out in the Atlantic or you would fall over the edge never to return. Observant people since the earliest Egyptian dynasties have known the world not to be flat, using evidence that was right there before any sailor who would use his eyes to see. All he need do was to look at the gradual appearance of another ship on the horizon, and think about it. All ships gradually appear, starting with the tip of the mast. During the time it takes the observer ship to travel to the twelve-mile horizon point, the rest of the observed ship, until the waterline, gradually appears. The only way this directly observed phenomenon can be accounted for is with a round, ball shaped earth. Ignoring this evidence before their very eyes, the flat earth belief prompted medieval sailors to be conservatively safe in not venturing far offshore into the Atlantic where their appallingly poor marine and navigational knowledge would almost guarantee disaster for them. Such a belief in a dangerous flat earth would be much more acceptable to their self-respect than a more accurate assessment of themselves as incompetent blue water sailors. Either belief, "You are too incompetent to sail the Atlantic," or "The Atlantic is impossibly dangerous to sail," would result in their remaining within the environment of their competence, close to shore, and it mattered little which they used because both predicted the same, safe outcome. Now if you were a medieval sailor, able to sail the Mediterranean Sea, but likely to drown far out on the stormy Atlantic, which would you prefer to believe; that you are incompetent, or the world is flat?


Interestingly, the Vikings, on the other hand, did not have a flat earth belief. They could, and did, sail anywhere they wanted, in addition to defeating all the locals when they got there. In so doing, they not only discovered Iceland, Greenland and North America, but conquered England, Ireland, France, Rome, and Northern Europe from Germany through Russia. Russia, in fact, is named after them; Rus in Norse meaning Viking. One could say with some assurance that they were used to dealing with an expanded environment with many negatives to be overcome.

How a belief, which is not true, can prevent a psychological problem

This flat earth belief predicted the most successful behavior in that restricted, medieval, payoff environment. It likely kept the Mediterranean sailors from developing a severe psychological problem akin to that suffered by the Appalachian miners. If the sailors believed instead that the earth was round, and they would not sail off the edge, some would continually venture out beyond where their nautical skill level could protect them. Those who then survived the Atlantic blue water storms would be in a predicament similar to that of the Appalachian miners after their mine caved in. They would face two undeniable negatives. First that the Atlantic can kill you very easily unless you are a master mariner, and second, not only are you an incompetent Atlantic sailor, but the offshore Atlantic also frightens you; something no self respecting macho Mediterranean sailor likely could have admitted to himself.

Consequently, the flat earth belief could protect the medieval sailors from having a problem; in the same way as my 1950's social belief that middle class teenage girls were not interested in sex protected me from learning that some girls would see me as sexually uninteresting. The flat earth belief would do this by preventing the sailors from quickly discovering horrendous negatives when their environment greatly expanded out on the briny deep. After this expansion of the negative payoffs they faced, it is very likely, being just like us today, they might over restrict their sailing environment, perhaps totally with conversion hysteria like the Appalachian miners and Anna "O", and thereby prevented from earning a living sailing in the safer Mediterranean, or closer to shore in the Atlantic.

Does a belief need to be true, or only valid?

This simple concept that one's beliefs do not have to be true can be better understood by looking at what we mean by the word **true** or **truth**. In the *Oxford Dictionary Of The English Language*, true means things ranging from faithful to straight or conforming, as in a straight line or a true or conforming curve or circle. A better way of looking at our beliefs is to see if they are valid. You may think of valid being a synonym for true, but it is not. You can see the meaning of valid from its antonym,  invalid (in-val-id), but using the French pronunciation, (in-va-lid). An

invalid is a sick or weak person. When some thing or idea or belief is invalid, it is weak. Conversely, when some thing or idea or belief is valid, it is strong or has strength; as in your parking ticket being validated (strengthened to have substance and worth) to allow you to get out of the parking lot without having to pay anything. So I will use the word valid to describe the status of a belief as worthwhile and invalid to describe a belief which has been made less useful by an environmental change. I suggest that you do the same to make things easier for yourself.

To determine if any one is trying to indoctrinate you in a belief different than what you now have, ask two simple questions: Does that person insist that the belief which he wants you to adopt is true? Then does he or she insist that the premise of the belief you hold now is rather shaky? If the answer to either is yes, then you can safely bet money that an attempt is being made to indoctrinate rather than educate you. On the other hand, if you, yourself, insist that the rationale for why you do what you do is true, you can conclude, at the confidence level of shooting a fish in a barrel, that you are believing instead of thinking.

The only meaningful question we can ask about our beliefs is not their truth, but what is their consequence; how predictive they are for us? What payoffs do we get for believing in them from our environment, regardless of their truth? In short, when you exercise your own judgment and examine any of your beliefs about things, life, other people, and how you should behave to be successful, you will get a more useful answer if you ask if they are valid rather than true.

You do not have to become an advocate for any of your beliefs when it is challenged by a different belief. You can evaluate either belief according to its payoff outcome in place of requiring the other belief to be wrong in order for your belief to be right. You have the right to take no partisan position between any two conflicting beliefs. Either may be right or wrong according to the restricted payoff environment which generated them. Your beliefs only need be a schematic on how to do things in the particular restricted environment and time in which you find yourself.

You can clearly see the limited use and poor outcomes of the adversary model in the legal system, wherein two or more lawyers argue in front of a jury and/or judge to try to convince them what the truth really is. From this legal example you can see why indoctrination is different from education. Each of the lawyers are using indoctrination procedures; selectively arguing their point of view to convince someone else that they

are right and the other wrong. The judge and or jury, are trying to make sense out of both indoctrination arguments to determine, if possible, what is valid. They are much closer to the educational model.

Using the psychoeducational viewpoint, contrary to what being your own judge might seem to imply, your job is not to decide which of any competing beliefs is right and which is wrong. As your own judge, your thinking responsibility is to disengage yourself from any emotional reaction to either belief, and rise above an advocacy position where you have to support one belief and negate the other. Your thinking job is to see where competing beliefs may be valid according to their consequence; one in this restricted payoff environment and the other belief in a different restricted environment with different payoff sources and conditions. If you see this way of thinking as superficial and unreal, may I remind you of the example of contradictory ideas on the nature of light in physics put forth by Albert Einstein — wave or quantum particles, both useful depending upon their particular environment — for which he was awarded the Nobel Prize.

Beliefs are psychological tools —— good for some situations, not for all

In this non-adversary mode of thinking, beliefs are not placed upon a psychological pedestal and obeyed unthinkingly as if we indeed were following something in us like Freud's idea of the superego. Instead, they are tools for living, and like any other tool, used best in certain situations and not in others. For example, is the spade with which you dig out your garden now worthless because that environment has changed? In a drought, when you need a pick ax to make any dent in that changed environment, do you throw away your spade? Or conversely, after a heavy rain softens the ground, does the use of the spade make the pick ax wind up on the trash heap? Like the spade and the pick ax, our beliefs are tools useful in one particular restricted environment and not in others. Common sense tells us that tools are not competitive or adversary or in a right-wrong dispute. In the psychoeducational view, neither are beliefs, which may work fine in one restricted environment but not in another. Now let's look at the next belief observation, universality.

Observation II: Universality

To be useful your beliefs need not apply everywhere

Your beliefs do not need to apply everywhere in every situation. They only have to be based upon the payoffs of the particular restricted environment in which you now operate, without needing to assume they apply to any other environment. Your beliefs do not have to match those of any other environment except the one in which you live. Your beliefs only need be a schematic on how to do things in the particular restricted environment and time in which you live.

When, in growing up, we started to question doing things in certain ways, one of the metabeliefs in which we were socially indoctrinated had to do with universality. It says that we should behave according to our beliefs because of their universality, meaning they apply everywhere. This metabelief is approximately as follows.

Metabelief II. Your Beliefs apply to everything.

Your beliefs are universal ones handed down from place to place where they have successfully guided others on how to properly do things. The wise person knows our beliefs are universal ones, discovered by our ancestors. The wise person knows that our beliefs are worthwhile because of their universality and the wisdom and knowledge which goes with it.

This metabelief is the one which Marion was operating on (in Chapter Two) in over generalizing liberal indoctrinated viewpoints about socio-sexual matters from the restricted psychological environment of UCLA, Westwood Village, West LA, Marina Del Rey and Laguna Beach, and assuming they were universal ones applying to everyone, everywhere.

There is another very emotional example of an idealized political belief being justified by this metabelief of the universality of our cherished ideas. Believers in democratic principles purport that democracy is the universal system of government for all peoples because we humans have a universal need for freedom. Believers in autocratic principles purport that benign dictatorship is the best system of government because we humans have a universal need to be led and taken care of. Let's look at the rational for these opposing beliefs, both of which are justified by the same metabelief of universality.

Neither democracy nor autocracy make the human social system

work. Roads get built and maintained in both democratic and dictatorial systems. People are cared for and loved in both belief environments. Criminals are caught and jailed. Democracies oppress certain segments of the population just as dictatorships do. Capitalism and socialism have existed side by side within both democracies and autocracies. Atheism and religion exist within both systems. The political system of democracy is a political belief, just as the political system of an autocracy or dictatorship is a political belief. Neither tell you how to build a road, fill in potholes, suppress crime, fall in love, be successful or make yourself happy. The concept of democracy and of autocracy only describes the belief supported by the payoffs and conditions of the environment in which they operate. Neither is true because of their claim to be universal, but both function in their respective environments because conditions in their environment validate them.

An absolute belief in democratic principles as the universal political system has run into the same problems as an absolute belief in unfettered capitalism as the natural human economic system. Since the Second World War, nation after nation has been emancipated from its colonial ties and set up as a democracy, only to re-evolve some years later as an autocratic state with a benign or despotic ruling dictatorship. Common sense would tell us that if democracy were based upon some universal principle, we would have seen democracy as the common mode of human government all throughout recorded history. We haven't. With some spasmodic flourishes in ancient Greece and Rome, democracy it seems, has been a stable political belief system enfranchising large numbers of participant citizens only since the industrial revolution and only in some of the heavily industrialized nations and in their colonies and possessions. As the ancient Greeks who first tried democracy reasoned, it is the best way to decide whose ox gets gored. If, however, you don't have an ox, why do you need a democratic system to protect it?

Even in this country, we started out with the notion that you could vote only if you were a white, male landowner, because only white, male landowners had anything they needed to protect. But that changed as we began to industrialize. A belief in democracy and technology seem to go hand in hand. Especially technology with a wide enough economic base to productively employ a majority of the population of a nation and give its citizens enough environmental payoffs, which they would be interested in protecting. In short, if you don't have much that is worthwhile, who cares what kind of government it is that tells you what you can or

cannot do with it?

Saying it is a universal need is not going to preserve democracy, because universality and democracy have nothing to do with each other. However there is nothing more politically aroused and vengeful than a people whose sense of prosperity and accomplishment is threatened. Also, there is nothing more indifferent than a people with or without the political right to divide up an austere standard of living. If you have something to lose, you take part in democracy. If you have nothing to lose, you take part in revolution. If you are in between, you take part in nothing.

We were indoctrinated to believe that our beliefs were universal and applied everywhere. A similar observation can be made with respect to indoctrination of an absolute metabelief over time, eternity.

Observation III: Eternality

To be useful your beliefs need not be ageless

Your beliefs do not require the wisdom of age or of the ages. They only have to be based upon the payoffs of the particular restricted environment in which you now live, without needing to assume those beliefs extend into the distant past having undergone eons of scrutiny by older and wiser ancestors. Your beliefs do not have to match those of any other time except the time in which you live. They are free to change as you change or the era in which you live changes. Your beliefs only need be a schematic on how to do things in the particular restricted environment and time in which you now live.

When, in growing up, we started to question doing things in certain ways, one of the metabeliefs in which we were socially indoctrinated had to do with age, and the wisdom it brings. It says that we should behave according to our beliefs because of their eternality, having passed the test of time. This metabelief is approximately as follows.

Metabelief III. Your Beliefs are eternal

Your beliefs are ancient ones handed down from generation to generation. The wise person knows our beliefs are ancient ones evolved by our ancestors, and incorporated the wisdom of many people throughout history in developing and testing our beliefs. The wise person knows that our beliefs are worthwhile because of their age and the wisdom and knowledge, which go with it.

Amazingly, we also make automatic assumptions about our beliefs due to this metabelief. We almost invariably do not see our beliefs as serving us according to the immediate environment in which we live, but as eternal — having the wisdom of the ages — handed down from the ancient past which we must respect and obey. We automatically assume that our beliefs extend into the distant past because of what this metabelief tells us; great age is wise and more respectable, therefore those of our human beliefs which have stood the test of great age and the scrutiny of many older, wiser ancestors are particularly valuable to us.

If you are a relationship-oriented person, usually female, how eternal does your belief in marriage have to be?

Let me give you some instances where we over-generalize our belief's usefulness, mistakenly gracing them with spurious antiquity and therefore, wisdom, when they are less than a few hundred years old, if that. To check out these assumptions, you can make your own common sense observation on historical contradictions. For example, if you were to ask the age of our present concept of marriage, the vast majority of us would say several thousand years, at least going back to the biblical period. We assume formalized, legal marriage, as we know it, to be ancient. This perception of marriage, prompted by this metabelief, is particularly important to many women, who as primarily relationship oriented people, see themselves as participating in a social institution which is eternal, and therefore, tried and true, and safe. Marriage, or at least our present concept of it, is, in fact, relatively new. You might be surprised to find out that governmental regulation of marriage in Western society, such as with marriage licenses, is less than two hundred years old. The first marriage licenses were issued by the English government to compete with professional, street corner scribes, who would record a civil marriage — two people intending to live together — on a paper "certificate." At that time, scribes recorded common law marriages to provide some record of family ties for the common folk. The government took over the practice of recording marriages and issuing marriage licenses as a means of raising revenue. Prior to that, government recognized marriage was only for the wealthy and/or ruling class. Again, except for Royals, marriage as a holy rite of the church for everyone did not come into existence until the early sixteenth century at the Council of Worms, which set church policy. Classical biblical marriage existed prior to that, but it was so informal

that "I divorce thee", said three times ended it. Since that's all it took to divorce a spouse then, it's likely that biblical marriage was not the marriage we are dealing with today. To have a basis to make a judgment about the agelessness — and assumed wisdom — of our current concept of marriage, you only have to count up the number of contradictions to that assumption. I have given you three. If you search recorded history, you can find your own cases. Therefore, with this observation of historical contradiction, you have the basis to make your own judgment on the likelihood of what many of us see as the result of historical effects over thousands of years — forging formal rules of relationships; is it more probably current belief wishfully over generalized, or is it social ritual so ancient as to become fact? Given this analysis of our desire for our beliefs to be so respected and eternal, you can make your own judgment of what you are allowed to do by your social indoctrination if a potential psychological problem looms in your close relationship or marriage. You can then give a realistic answer to the question, "If necessary, is it permissible to change what I believe about marriage and what it should be? This question is important if, as a relationship oriented person, usually a woman, you are basing the valuation of yourself, in large part, on how well you perform as a partner in marriage. And especially so, if the marriage, given that our modern, collective concept on what a marriage should be is only several hundred years old, does not seem to work out the way it was supposed to. A divorce rate of fifty percent is very likely a result of a presumably ancient, tried-and-true picture on how marriage should operate that has not kept up with a changing sociosexual environment.

If you are a career oriented person, usually male, how ancient does your belief, that you should be paid, even rewarded handsomely, for your services, have to be?

A second example of endowing our current beliefs with ancient wisdom and justification can be seen in our assumption that a career — preferably white collar — is an absolute middle class necessity. Currently, career oriented people — males in particular — believe that we should be paid for what we do, both for the cash and the middle class sense of accomplishment the amount of cash gives us. Our justification for that belief is that it's part of the wisdom gained since ancient times: "It's always been this way," i.e., we have always been rewarded with money for our

labors. This unquestioned assumption that it's always been that way is necessary to make palatable the typical, modern middle class, life goal orientation — or obsession — of career and job as part of mother nature's plan for males. It would seem pretty silly to severely restrict and regulate the possible payoffs in your life this way and to evaluate its quality, primarily by the amount of money you make, if just three hundred years ago, no one got paid for their services, but received only the basics needed to survive.

You can make your own common sense observation on historical contradiction to test the likelihood of our always having been paid for what we do as belief or fact. Most of us assume being paid for our services had its antecedents eons ago. Nothing could be less accurate than assuming our current payoff environment is identical to those of our ancestors. Our system of being paid something for our labors is a recent innovation, less than several hundred years old. The term we use to describe our paycheck is our wage. Its original meaning was only a pledge of security in exchange for work, the necessities of life with few if any frills, and possessions. To make a wager or gamble your money on the outcome of an event is to place it with a third party as **security** for the bet. The other word we use is salary, with its original meaning being expenses given to Roman soldiers to buy the "**sal**" or salt they needed on their long marches.

Prior to the industrial revolution, the methods of employment for the majority of our ancestors were armies, feudal share cropping, serfdom, peasantry, vassalage, apprenticeships, indenture, servitude, and slavery, where the necessities of life were provided, but no monies were paid except as occasional rewards, or expenses. To hire originally meant to bribe or temporarily rent the services of. The individual who worked for money during our not too remote past was deemed a mercenary, a scornful negative applied later to professional soldiers.

For us today, the concept of service for security would be demeaning, even ridiculous. Yet, as a practical method for large numbers of human beings to make their living before the industrial revolution, it was environmentally valid in a low tech, autocratic social payoff environment. If you make a common sense observation of historical contradiction like this, you have a basis for making a judgment about our assumption (to justify our current middle class obsession with career) that we should be handsomely paid for our services because it has always been that way. You can judge if our assumption — "it's always been that way" — is

probably an over generalization of the history of our current belief, or more likely fact? Now let's examine another common metabelief which blocks us from using problem solving thinking in our lives, that all we do needs the sanctification of some higher authority.

Observation IV: Higher Authority

To be useful your beliefs need not be approved by some higher authority

Your beliefs do not need to be based upon any assumed directive of higher authority. They are free to change independent of any authority. Your beliefs only need be a schematic on how to do things in the particular restricted environment and time in which you now live. One of our common metabeliefs, however, is that our beliefs, to have any real value to us, must have been checked out and handed down to us by some higher authority. That metabelief is as follows:

Metabelief IV.

Your beliefs are based upon higher authority

We humans being so fallible, the most valuable aids for any decent, self-respecting person are beliefs, which have been given to us by higher authority. These beliefs need not have come directly to us from some higher authority, but by our predecessors who evaluated and tested our beliefs for us, and who were, in all likelihood, inspired by some higher authority.

Fifty some years ago, the Nazi War Crimes Tribunal at Nuremberg discredited the notion that presupposes you or I are not responsible for what we do or believe, simply because we are only following orders of some higher authority. Long before that judgment at Nuremberg, our predecessors abandoned this irresponsible notion for common sense reasons when they stopped claiming that, we do what we do and believe what we believe, because we are only following the dictates of God's will. As you can imagine, it would sound patently absurd and silly if everyone replied, "It's God's will" in doing one's own thing when asked why one does it. If you and I were in those earlier times, it wouldn't take too long, honestly not knowing what God's will is in such detail, before we would reach the conclusion that either a) God was on speaking terms

with everybody but you and I, or b) everyone else was putting us on. Given these two alternatives, you can readily see that a claim by anyone to superior theological knowledge as a justification for what one does would sound good, but not be too believable, and eventually, would be treated as the nonsense it is.

Ironically, the Polynesians, those thought of in Freud's time by uninformed people as all being savages and barbarians had a very sophisticated philosophical system explaining the relationship between higher authority — God — and man. According to the Polynesians, God was very busy making the universe work and run, and with so much detail to pay attention to, God had no time to dwell on affairs between humans. We, according to the Polynesians, therefore, were totally responsible for how we behaved towards each other, the good, the problems, and the evil that existed between us, and also responsible for working out solutions to these problems ourselves. This philosophy is the complete antithesis to our metabelief that our beliefs reflect higher authority, and therefore have authority over us as if they were imperatives we must obey.

It is almost impossible to talk about higher authority without referring to God. So I will not attempt the almost impossible. The traditional religionist's viewpoint on the nature and origins of Man is a belief, and an untestable one. But there is really no conflict between the religionist's belief in the nature of man and the Environmental Laws of Psychology, because, as you have seen so far, the Environmental Laws do not say the religionist's belief on man is right or wrong, but only how that belief works and produces certain outcomes for those who believe in it. For example, there is a mistaken perception that psychologists and psychiatrists are opposed to people believing in God, because we are supposed to be the alternative to religion as psychological high priests and purveyors of scientific truth. This thoughtless assumption is based upon the notion that since we come from science-oriented disciplines, we, like general science, worship truth. Science does nothing of the kind. Science does not say this is true and that is false, but this causes this and that causes that. Clinical Psychology and psychiatry, also, are not interested in philosophical or religious truth, but what causes problems and what can be used to resolve these problems.

Science and questions about God are not on the same level of discourse because questions about God are scientifically untestable. We do not yet have the technology to detect or measure God's works or influence upon us. Myself, I have no quarrel with God as a philosophical

concept or omnipotent entity. I also have no intellectual, philosophical, professional, or scientific argument with the concept: God is the omnipotent mediator of all that which we do not yet know. When we find out how God does it, we will do it ourselves, as history shows we have consistently done in the past.

As we became more sophisticated through time, we began justifying what we did more with the following metabelief on the nature of things, than with the idea of higher authority backing us up.

Observation V: Natural Law

To be useful your beliefs need not be based on laws of nature

Since, as an adult you have the right to think about anything you wish, your beliefs do not need to be based upon any assumed principles of nature, instinct, or natural law. They are free to change independent of natural law and our human nature, having no need of nature's stamp of approval and authority. Your beliefs only need be a schematic on how to do things in the particular restricted environment and time in which you now live

We automatically assume, or we try to elevate our beliefs into something greater than ourselves, using a common metabelief, that our beliefs are based upon our very nature. We were indoctrinated in this metabelief in childhood as a response to "Why?" Although each of us might use different words to express this metabelief, they all boil down to something like this.

Metabelief V. Your beliefs are based upon nature

Our beliefs are only reflections of our own human constitution, nature and instinct. The way we do things are natural because they flow from the way we basically are. Our beliefs therefore are only shortened versions of natural law, and not really beliefs. They are statements of natural principle which rational and intelligent people do not violate. If our naturally derived beliefs are violated, such behaviors are perversions and unnatural abominations.

About 2400 years ago, starting with Aristotle, we relied less on divine mandate to explain things. We began to justify why things are the way they are by resorting to the very nature of things themselves. Birds flew

south because it was in their very nature to do so, and we did whatever we did because of our human nature. In trying to justify our beliefs by claiming intimate and detailed knowledge of nature's laws, we might be accused of being superficial sophists, but we would never be called religious nuts with delusions of grandeur.

In becoming more sophisticated, however, we have only changed labels, switching principles of nature for God's will, as the justification for our behaviors and beliefs. But in changing the name of the legitimizing authority from God to nature, we have not become any less arbitrary in the justification process. Only, now we have a more believable authority putting its unquestionable rubber stamp of approval on whatever it is we believe. While it is quite easy to reject the next fellow's divinely given insight into the will of God when we don't have it ourselves, it is not so easy to question or challenge that person's knowledge of the principles of nature, which we presume is attainable by everyone through observation, experience or instruction. When we are told by someone, who causes us a problem, that he is only doing what is natural, he puts us in the impossible situation of having to argue with Mother Nature instead of talking to he who causes the problem.

In our short available history of human events, we see recorded every possible violation of every possible standard with which we humans have tried to structure our lives, and supposedly rise above the animal level. What we assume to be natural law or instinct has been regularly violated by child abuse, torture, infanticide, incest, celibacy, sexual orgy and license, homosexuality, polygamy, self-mutilation, martyrdom, cravenness, cowardice, and genocide. We mock every standard proposed to justify our beliefs on how things should be. Any of these violations of our beliefs, on how things should be, are seen as unnatural or abnormal. Our beliefs about natural law only reflect what we would like human nature to be in our particular restricted environment, not what it really is.

With this particular metabelief we try to elevate our arbitrary social standards above the level of social custom and make them standards set down by nature which no one may disregard. Our problem in setting standards for ourselves is that our species has a full range of behaviors ranging from intense love and worship to obscene hate, warm brotherhood to passionate violence, chastity to sexual license, compassion to indifference, virtue to viciousness, sophisticated, abstract thought analysis to primitive, bumbling trial and error. All of our behaviors, whether we like them or not, represent the full capacity with which we are endowed

to behave as needed in meeting the demands placed upon us for survival in any possible environment we encounter. To assume that any of the behaviors we can display, even those we despise, are unnatural, is the height of human arrogance and brainless social dogma. If a behavior is unnatural, we would be incapable of performing it. A crocodile studying differential calculus and then publishing a paper on it is unnatural. That act is unnatural to a crocodile simply because it does not have the ability to do it. Similarly we do not see crocodiles engaged in cross-country marathons because they do not have the ability to engage in this type of behavior which is unnatural to their species. On the other hand, for a great crocodile to devour, without hesitation, a rotten, maggot infested carcass is quite natural because it is physiologically built, unlike us, to successfully do so without gagging, vomiting or becoming dreadfully sick. In short, if you can do it, it is natural. Any limits placed upon what you can do are determined by our social standards, criminal laws, likes and dislikes, and not Mother Nature.

A current use of this metabelief is the controversy about homosexuality being dictated by nature versus just a choice of a different lifestyle. One can ask, not that question, but is the controversy itself anything else but an attempt to indoctrinate us in another belief; that gays can't help themselves but engage in homosexual behaviors?

While you and I could argue back and forth on the basis of homosexuality — learning or genetics — we can make some sense from the belief in the genetic basis of being gay if you look, not at its premise, but at its consequence. Such a genetic basis belief bails gays out of the negative consequences of seducing, i.e., "teaching" others to be gay, especially the sex objects of pedophiles, since, their argument would run that, those who allow themselves to be seduced are, because of their genes, eventually going to turn out to be gay anyway. Hence, those seduced have not had anything bad done to them for which the seducer is to blame. Now that seems to be a perfectly good, practical payoff for believing that if I am gay, it is because Mother Nature made me that way, and I had no choice in the matter, hence I should feel no guilt.

While I am very sympathetic to the problems of gays living in our society, a claim, that Mother nature made them do it, is not very convincing. We can see the overuse of this metabelief with everything that is challenged or questioned, even to the point of putting it on the labels of "natural" breakfast food boxes. On the other hand, gays can take heart that homosexuality is not an unnatural aberration, since anything we are

able to do is natural. The real issue with which gays have yet to deal is the same problem with which we all have yet to deal; recognizing that limits on all behavior, including homosexual behavior, are set by society and mankind, not the laws of nature.

The use of this metabelief on natural law to justify beliefs during time of change can be seen in almost any area of human affairs, including economics. In the United States, we have a belief that capitalism is the only workable economic system. In other countries however, notably in Scandinavia, there is a strongly held belief that socialism is the best way to meet our economic needs. Dyed in the wool capitalists argue that theirs is the only truly workable economic system, because everyone knows that the principles of unfettered free enterprise are part of us and therefore an innate behavior pattern. Socialists, on the other hand, argue just as strongly that everyone knows that we are a social, not a competitive species and therefore a belief in unfettered capitalism has to be wrong, and socialism right.

During the past three centuries, unfettered capitalism was a belief which was environmentally valid world wide, because the payoffs for it in that environmental period. Capitalism flourished during the period of transition of the major nations of the world from agrarian to industrialized societies. During that era, unfettered capitalism was a valid belief with environmental payoffs, because it directed and motivated millions of people towards a specific goal of the mechanization of society with benefits for us all. In spite of its evils, we can look around us today and see what it accomplished. The vast majority of us who live in industrialized nations are certainly better off than our ancestors of 300 years ago, and better off than our neighbors in undeveloped third world countries.

But today, the belief in unrestricted free enterprise does not meet the same environmental conditions that were present in the last three centuries. The major nations have achieved industrialization. Their saturation point of industrialization has been reached and passed. There are few payoffs for a belief in unfettered free enterprise because our environment will not support it. In this nation alone, we can produce more than the entire world can consume. How many refrigerators can the world use? One per person? Two? Ten? We need in our present restricted slice of environmental reality, not the ability to produce more goods, but more consumers, and the socialistic practice of sharing the wealth is one way to produce more consumers. A belief in a partially social based economy is finding more validity because today's particular restricted environment

has payoffs for any belief which produces more customers who can buy things.

Neither the belief in capitalism nor the belief in socialism has anything to do with natural law. Both have restricted environmental validity on their side during the period of their usefulness in a particular environment which provides payoffs for either capitalism or socialism. If we were to require that capitalism be part of us because everyone around us knows that, we would make our economic belief system very restrictive. We would have to stick with unfettered free enterprise after its period of validity had passed instead of trying out other alternative beliefs which would be more in touch with changes in our environment. On the other hand, if we are solid socialists and require socialism to be the one correct, economic belief because everyone around us knows it is part of us, most of us would still be living on farms and driving ox carts instead of Hondas and Mercedes.

If you demand that your beliefs be based upon natural laws which you cannot ignore, this cuts you off from the many different ways to skin a cat — sexually, or participating in a relationship, or a job — that work very well, but have nothing to do with natural laws. Let's turn to another observation of a metabelief which locks our beliefs in place, mankind's manifest destiny.

Observation VI: Manifest Destiny

To be useful your beliefs need not reflect manifest destiny or some grand purpose

Your beliefs do not need to be based upon any assumed, manifest human destiny, higher purpose, or supreme goals. The only destiny, goals or purposes you need be concerned about are your own, which predict how to be successful in your current environment. Your beliefs only need be a schematic on how to do things in the particular restricted environment and time in which you now live.

This metabelief, in which we were socially indoctrinated as children, is a particularly interesting one to me. For years it steered my beliefs and viewpoint on life and what people should do. Although you and I might use different words to describe this metabelief about our beliefs, the general theme and implication of it is approximately as follows.

Metabelief VI. Your beliefs are linked to higher purpose

Your beliefs are motivated by our species manifest destiny and higher goals. The manifest destiny of our species is to better itself in all ways and to improve what it does. Our species must improve its condition since it has an observable, base nature. This supreme purpose is the motivating goal of anyone with a rational mind. To have any worth, our beliefs must be part of, and get their motivating authority from, the ultimate destiny and higher purpose of Mankind.

To get perspective on the idea that giving personal meaning to one's life is the best way to feel good about what we do and what we are, we have to stop looking for verification or approval from some external authority. To do this we have to critically examine one of the most powerful and unquestioned of our metabeliefs about our beliefs; That Mankind has some special manifest destiny or supreme purpose towards which it is directed by some outside force, or towards which it is naturally evolving as the higher faculties of Mankind gradually overcome its baser and darker nature.

To demonstrate the great degree to which each of us are trained and indoctrinated in this metabelief, let me give you a real life example of how this metabelief blocks our thinking. Some years ago, the United Farm Workers sued the University of California because its Davis Campus was doing research on automated farm equipment that would cost farm workers their jobs. The basis for their lawsuit was that public tax monies were being used to deprive farm laborers of work. The reaction to their suit was predictable; both from the schooled general public and particularly from the academic community, which earns it's living doing research of all types. The general opinion on the UFW's cause was quite negative, even derisive and ridiculing, with comments like: "What do those dumb farm workers know about anything?" We automatically rejected the claims of the farm workers because we had been taught, or assume, there is some grand goal or manifest destiny towards which, as individuals and a species, we are striving, and research to find better ways of doing things is certainly part of this manifest destiny of Mankind. We view this manifest destiny in many ways, from the uplifting of the general condition of the species in humanistic, social, economic, philosophical, technological, civilized and cultural terms to individual achievements any of us can make along these same lines. We describe this metabelief about our common destiny and goal with words like progress, discovery,

improvement, etc., applied to the human pursuits of culture, education, arts and sciences, etc. The list of improvement areas is endless.

If you respond to this metabelief now, like my academic colleagues and I did then, you like us, would judge the cause of the farm workers as silly and totally without merit. If you do so, as my colleagues and I did without any thought as to why, it is because of this metabelief that says our beliefs must reflect the supreme purpose of the species for our beliefs to have any merit whatsoever. But if you disregard our metabelief for a moment, you can place the farm worker's claim in perspective. They saw the new, brightly painted, chromed, powerful, humming, throbbing, roaring and meticulously designed automated farm equipment, not as an advancement, but only as a different way of doing the same farming chores they do themselves. Their assessment of the conflict between themselves and the university researchers is quite correct. Advancement, betterment, progress, improvements, etc., is an arbitrary value judgment based totally upon a belief system of what is better and what is worse. They might adapt the words of Tevye in *Fiddler On The Roof* to easily explain their cause:

Lord, who made the lion lie beside the lamb. You made me just the way I am. Would it spoil some great, eternal plan, if the fruit were picked by hand?

If there was no compelling need to build automated farm equipment with public funds, as there would be if all the farm workers in a region came down with some allergy, then the decision to support research that takes away the means for making a living for large numbers of people is based upon nothing more than the arbitrary, political sanctioning of one belief system (the research worker's) over another belief system (the farm worker's). The UFW are simply looking at the payoff to them of a belief that says automated farm equipment is no better than human labor, but just a different way of accomplishing the same goal. With that perspective, their conflict with the university is not one that has anything to do with progress or betterment of Mankind, but a question of who's everyday need to make a living is more sanctioned and supported by society; their own, or that of the research workers and the technicians who build, maintain and operate the farm equipment?

Mankind needs no justification for why it exists. It needs no higher purpose or manifest destiny. Mankind just is. Our species exists because it has already earned its place in the cosmos. We have nothing to prove.

You and I belong here and have every right to exist with no apologies, excuses, or reasons necessary to justify our continued existence. The term Mankind only describes you and I, and what we do separately and together. Without you and I, and the rest of us as individuals, doing day by day, whatever it is we do to meet our individual needs, the species itself will not survive and we will have no need for the grand descriptive label of Mankind. In short, without we insignificant, individual grains of sand on the beach, there is no beach. If, in trying to decide what is more important, someone's rice bowl or progress, you hear that the manifest destiny or higher purpose of the human species is involved, indoctrination is being attempted, not education. Now let's look at another metabelief that locks our beliefs in psychological cement; our beliefs are based upon our gender.

Observation VII: Gender

To be useful your beliefs need not reflect your sex

Your beliefs do not need to be based upon your sexual gender, with the positive and negative payoffs existing in one restricted payoff environment assumed to be set by sexual instinct and therefore represent all possible payoff environments. Your sexual gender only limits and defines what role you will play in reproduction of the species; nothing else. All other possible sex roles are the result of the payoffs in any restricted environment in which you could live. Your beliefs only need be a schematic on how to do things in the particular restricted environment and time in which you now live.

Despite all the changes we have seen in sex roles over the past thirty years, without much thought, most of us still believe that our sex determines the limits on much, if not all, of what we can do, what we want to do, and what we instinctively must do, in life. The metabelief in which all of us have been indoctrinated, and which justifies believing that sexual instincts rule us all is, approximately, as follows.

Metabelief VII. Your beliefs are based upon sexuality

Because your gender affects everything you do, your sex is inescapably part of the basis of your beliefs. Your beliefs exist because your sexual instincts setting your interests, your sexual dependence or independence, and your perception of your innate abilities in life.

Basically, you need to answer the question, how much do I control being male or female, and how much does being male or female control me? The answer, of course, lies in the consequence of what you believe you are, not in the premise of what you believe you are. To get an answer, you have to first determine whatever it is that you believe you are — then determine what that belief about yourself prompts you to do in the particular restricted environment in which you live.

Are women sexually programmed to need a mate, or is that just an indoctrinated belief?

We also see our actual sexual behavior patterns as based upon so called "sexual instinct" as this metabelief dictates us to believe. Some women, for instance, attribute their efforts to increase their sexual attractiveness to find a mate, directly to their female "nature," as if they have no choice in the matter. If we decide to think instead of believe, we can see an alternative explanation of this behavior pattern as the result of youthful indoctrinated belief preprogramming. We can also see that it is not a thought out decision on a) whether one wants to be sexually attractive, b) when should one be sexually attractive, or c) does one really have to be sexually attractive? A similar question could also profitably be asked about whether one is motivated by needs generated by female sexual nature to find a mate, or is this phenomenon prompted by the payoffs available in a particular restricted young adult environment. In particular, is this press to find a mate caused by nature, or by a socially indoctrinated belief so metabelieved into fact, that no one would ever think to question it? If you judge that the drive to find and have a mate is more a belief on social conformity rather than sexual instinct, it gives you a lot of freedom in being the master, or in this example, the mistress of your own fate. With that decision, your freedom of choice in the matter is restored. You can decide if you really need a mate, or not; especially if he correspondingly behaves as if he expects you to conform to this metabelief by routinely greeting him with a "Hi, Sailor," or its sexual equivalent.

If the desire to be sexually attractive is based upon nature, then it is instinctual and every woman would have this natural demand within her. There would be no exceptions. Dior, Chanel and Max Factor, or some Stone Age predecessor would have been inbred and genetic. Obviously, each of us have seen women in our lives who have no desire to make themselves sexually attractive, either to men or other women. Therefore,

No!
Not in
nature

if you make a common sense observation on exceptional cases, you have a basis for judging it likely that those who make this claim about sexual instinct really want to believe something rather than take the trouble to check their claim out. Hence, they are very likely operating on a belief considered as fact; a belief due to social indoctrination, very likely by peers in the very restricted payoff environment of junior high through high school.

Are males sexually programmed to have as much sex as possible, or is that an indoctrinated belief?

Many males, in the same way, attribute their sexually exaggerated behavior patterns to hormones instead of what they have been sociosexually indoctrinated to believe about themselves during adolescence and as young adults. If locker room braggadocio is representative of male sexual self belief, and I think it is, then the reliable, typical male belief — about what the male sexual standard should be — ready, willing and able to have sex any time, anywhere it is available, for as many times as possible. With respect to the claim that this male sexual excess is a result of male nature, I would suggest you ask the question; Is this another instance of a socially indoctrinated belief being so metabelieved into fact that no one would ever think of questioning it?

One great problem in characterizing human male and female sexual behavior as instinctual is that it is much too voluntary and self-controlled. In the lower animal orders, we can observe instinctual behaviors regularly. Instinct is so involuntary, that once an instinctual behavior pattern is triggered off, it cannot be stopped, short of shooting the animal. That is not characteristic of human sexual behavior, one of the easiest behaviors to inhibit. To deal with this claim about male sexual nature, you can decide to think this through and make your own common sense observation on exceptional cases. You can ask how many men would we have to check out before we would come upon one male who did not have the same sexual perspective on sexual drive, frequency and requirements as described in the locker room tales. In short, it makes a lot more sense to view male sexual exaggeration or excess as the sexual equivalent of over-eating. Both drives are set up by our constitution, but we don't view eating to excess as particularly macho; just as someone pigging out. If you judge that male sexual excess is likely the result of common high school social indoctrination, you grant yourself a great deal of sexual freedom

with that choice, especially if the payoffs in your particular restricted sexual environment are not favorable to sexual excess.

To see the extent of lack of much thought in indoctrinated male sexual expectation, the typical young male would question the sexual potency, if not the mental stability, of any other male who was offered a roll in the hay by a woman and turned it down. Even if the man who declined the offer of sex did so because a) he had just had sex, or b) was going to have sex soon with someone else, or c) had a serious relationship with another woman and declined simply because he did not want to jeopardize it. As you can see from making common sense observations, the most likely accounting for this phenomenon is that the sexual beliefs of young men are not derived from male sexual instinct, but from social indoctrination in beliefs which prompt them, because of their relative lack of long term sexual experience, to continually look for sexual payoffs in their youthful environment — to make up for that lack.

With the knowledge that male and female sexual self-perception is indoctrinated and environment dependent rather than sexual instinct, as we grow older, we can make sense out of the reliable observation that other things, like parenthood, or work, and a myriad of other interests that come with experience, compete with sexual behavior for the many other payoffs in our environment.

With these types of common sense observations, which you can make yourself, you also have a basis for making a judgment about sexually oriented behavior, about life goals and sexual behavior itself. This means when someone else uses this metabelief to tell you what you should believe about yourself according to your gender, they are attempting to indoctrinate you, not educate you, about how you should view yourself. In addition, if you find yourself using terms like sexual instinct, sexual nature, or even sexual superiority, it is more likely you are believing in place of thinking and not judging yourself and your beliefs. I need not remind you — but I will — that if you find yourself dealing with a potential psychological problem concerning sexual behavior, ability or preferences, or concerning typical male vs. female life goals like career, marriage, and relationships, to name just a few, it would be in your own best interest to recognize this metabelief and the beliefs it justifies, as guidelines, not natural laws or factual statements on the human condition. If you do make your own judgment on this metabelief, you then can explore as many other options for preventing a future psychological problem as you can think of. As I said before, if you know one way to skin a cat,

there are at least a half dozen other ways to do things that work just as well. Now let's look at a metabelief that can be quite debilitating, one that sets your personal self worth through social class customs.

Observation VIII: Personal Worth

To be useful your beliefs need not determine your personal worth though social class custom

Your beliefs do not need to be based specifically upon the payoffs of your restricted social class environment, assumed to be the same as the payoffs in all possible social environments. These specific values of your social class prejudice your status and worth as a person, but only if, without thought, you automatically allow it. Your beliefs are free to change, according to the social environment in which you find yourself, with your social values being those you voluntarily choose, allowing you to effectively interact in any social class payoff environment. Your beliefs only need be a schematic on how to do things in the particular social environment and time in which you now live.

One of the hardest self-perceptions to overcome in adapting ourselves to the problems life brings us with changes in ourselves and our environment as we mature, is our justifying metabelief that our beliefs indelibly fix what is worthwhile as well as our worth as a person. Our social class metabelief about our beliefs and the behaviors prompted by them goes something like this.

Metabelief VIII. Your beliefs determine your personal worth and have to reflect your social class

Our beliefs are social rules we obey because we are not like those in the other social classes. The person who does not automatically accept the values our social beliefs give us is either a fool, or an inferior person having little personal worth, from an obviously degenerate social class not in touch with that which is worthwhile and real.

It may amaze you, but this metabelief is the cause of the prejudice which exists in the upper, middle and lower social classes. This prejudice exists, as we shall see, because this justifying metabelief about our beliefs tell us to treat the values our beliefs give us as if they were factual statements instead of untestable beliefs. Most of us automatically follow

its dictate, irrespective of our own social class.

We were indoctrinated in this metabelief as children in a well meaning attempt to acculturate us indelibly in the social and personal beliefs, viewpoints and values held by our parents. This indoctrination is given in the assumption that the child needs to be civilized — giving him or her the same stable and conforming orientation to life, which parents have, and in which parents were indoctrinated by grandparents. We have difficulty placing this particular metabelief in perspective because we were indoctrinated in it as soon as we could walk and talk and do things independently. We do not see its fundamental premise based upon values, but upon values taken as facts. We were indoctrinated to see facts, not arbitrary values. If we showed signs of behaving differently from that which we were indoctrinated in, we were immediately threatened with being socially isolated, i.e., anyone who behaves "that" way is a "worthless" person.

Separating the observation that you are different from the assumption that you are therefore inferior or superior

We almost universally believe, or behave as if we believe, that there is a higher, more noble, enlightened, altruistic, human way of behaving, and there is also a lower, coarser, more self oriented, animal like way of behaving. No one I have ever met and talked to has ever told me that this metabelief is just a belief and not a fact. Every person I know, including myself, has taken this belief — there are good people and bad people, better people and lesser people, superior people and inferior people — as an unquestionable fact, because we have been reared in this metabelief that it is factual.

Anyone who momentarily suspends belief of this metabelief, can then make a common sense observation on values and see we are very likely dealing with belief mistaken for fact. The problem is not in reliably making a distinction between two types of behavior patterns, like eating with great etiquette in a posh restaurant, and gobbling down your food by yourself when you are in a hurry. The problem is in our unquestioned assumption that one set of these behaviors is prompted by enlightened belief and is obviously, manifestly superior to the other. With our belief taken as fact that there are higher-lower belief and behavior systems, we go beyond just describing different things as reliable, having distinctive behavior patterns. We then prejudge individual people, and large groups

of other humans according to their conformity with it. This assumption of values describing such differing behavior patterns is the total basis for social class prejudice. Assumed by us to be fact, it has been used by society to regulate our behaviors in all areas of life from business and professional spheres to the personal and social areas of sexual and cultural behaviors, simply by adding on the codicil that approved social behaviors make you a superior person. This superior/inferior social class metabelief is only a subjective value and such values are not testable. We can define things any way we like, but that does not make them automatically supportable by hard, empirical fact, or related in any objective way to the behaviors of people.

What's money got to do with social class?

These same prejudicial labels are found today in sociology, psychology and economics texts used in higher education. Sociologists are not unaware of the prejudicial social bias implicit in these labels of upper and lower social classes of people, so for the past few decades, we have seen a slight modification of them to justify their continued use in accordance with our metabelief on social values determining your worth as a person. We have added on an economic or material tag on each label, such as middle socio-economic class, which does not tell us anything we did not know before; the traditionally thought of "upper" class has always had more money than the "lower" class. This modification to upper, middle, and lower *socio-economic* classes only disguises our prejudicial social belief in a meaningless equating of economic status with personal worth. In using the tag of economic worth, you can see we are still not being objective, as simple labels of upper, middle and lower economic class would be. We still include our biased reference to social class because of our metabelief.

What happens to your values when you change your social class environment?

In terms of our own personal life, we behave the way we do because of the particular restricted social class payoff environment in which we live. No matter what our personal beliefs are on what is proper and good, if we were constantly subjected to the environmental payoff conditions of another social class, we would rapidly begin to behave according to its "characteristic" behavior patterns, and even adopt its useful beliefs. For

instance, in our "elevated" class milieu, we do not generally believe in physical force as a valid means of settling conflict, as we often observe to happen in a "lower" class setting. We believe physical means to be a more animalistic and less human way of doing things. In our own social environment, this belief has validity until we meet an armed burglar in our home in the middle of the night. As the witty saying tells us, a conservative is a liberal who has been mugged. We have our "upper and middle" class surround of lawyers, respectful and deferential police, political influence, a bank account sufficient to call upon these resources, and the learned confidence to swiftly use them. Without these payoff sources available in our environment, a belief in the appropriateness of physical means of resolving issues is very likely to have environmental validity for you living in a "lower" social class surround.

For whatever reason, suppose you were forced to take a job tending bar in a joint across the tracks. In that particular payoff environment, no matter what your present beliefs on physical force are, and no matter what negative value you place on a person who believes in physical force, your new social payoff environment would soon create a belief in the appropriateness of physical force, and your metabelief on social values would prompt you to value the person who uses it effectively. So while members of the middle and upper classes look down their noses at the physical means the lower class people use to resolve problems, the members of the lower class see themselves looking down at other classes of people as dishonest sneaks who know how to secretly make lots of money by who they know, but also as fools who just pussyfoot around avoiding the reality of physical confrontation.

You give yourself an advantage when you make a common sense observation on values here. That observation on values gives you the basis for being your own judge of the social values, which differ from one restricted social class environment to another. You can decide which of the probabilities is more likely, the social values being factual, as you were indoctrinated to believe as a child, or that they are only guidelines to the positive and negative payoffs to attend to in a particular social class environment. Such common sense observations give you the basis for being your own judge of all social custom beliefs. With such a judgment, you are able to deal with all these social customs as beliefs, not as social imperatives which you must, in fear and trembling, obey, lest your personal worth suffer. In particular, you can view them simply as guidelines, which tell you how to automatically behave within your own particular

restricted social class payoff environment. This gives you the freedom to understand, as well as effectively interact with, people from all social classes, having different social class beliefs. Recognizing the differences between members of differing social classes as primarily differences in beliefs makes it possible to see prejudicial class labels of superior/inferior as totally unnecessary. This common sense recognition of social class values, which dominate one's life, as simply belief guidelines, allows you to prevent a possible psychological problem if your social class environment changes unpredictably or your behavior becomes "socially unacceptable" and your beliefs about social class no longer work for you.

Does our social custom follow the law, or does the law follow social custom?

Our social class customs are so indoctrinated and seen as fact instead of just beliefs, that even our legal system gets trapped in confusing, non-sensical value judgments. Let me point out what underlies our legal and mental machinations to deal with deviance from social acceptability with a dramatic example. A few years ago, a young woman in California was arrested for going topless at an isolated beach. Forty years ago, she would have been committed indefinitely to the state mental hospital for such an act. But our common perception and belief about nudity as a socially deviant behavior has changed in the past four decades. Even the police now know that to go topless at the beach has nothing to do with mental health or mental illness. So this young woman was arrested for a violation of a local ordinance. If she had gone topless downtown, however, she would not have been arrested, but have been immediately taken to the local mental health clinic, because no one goes topless downtown, according to our middle class social customs, except crazy people.

Since the local authorities could not classify her as mentally ill, they decided to prosecute her under the local statute forbidding public nudity. On the day of her trial, a large group of her supporters stripped down naked in front of the courthouse to protest her prosecution and dare the authorities to arrest them too. They were not arrested, nor taken to the mental health clinic. According to authorities, their behavior was protected under constitutional first amendment expression of free speech. Here, you can make a common sense observation of contradictory cases to judge the legal claim that it is bad to be nude. In effect, the law in question was interpreted to mean it was perfectly okay to be naked in public

downtown, but not alone at an isolated beach

The court's use of the law does not make sense at all if we focus on merging value judgments on nudity with legal principles. But it does make sense if we focus on what it permitted behaviorally and what we can objectively observe. The behavior in question was forbidden only if one person did it, but not if a group did it, no matter what legalese is used to explain it. Only one interpretation of this official behavior makes any sense. The court was really upholding social custom and values, and using a tortuous twisting of principle to make it fit custom. Without the court coming out and specifically saying so, it decided that if one person offends social custom, that is violation of law. If many people offend social custom, that is not violation of law, but new social custom.

Let's now examine a similar metabelief, which, up until forty years ago, has been the justification for incarcerating thousands upon thousands of our fellow human beings, for no other reason than they have been odd or different; social class values are standards of mental health.

Observation IX: Mental Health

To be useful your beliefs need not determine your mental health through social class value

Your beliefs do not need to be based upon the payoffs for social values and customs of the restricted middle class environment, taken as standards of mental health, and assumed to be representative of the payoffs in all possible social environments. Your beliefs are free to change, independent of middle class values mistaken as standards of mental health. Your beliefs only need be a schematic on how to do things in the particular restricted environment and time in which you now live.

Although you and I might differ in the words we use to describe this particular metabelief about our beliefs, we have all been indoctrinated in it. It is approximately as follows.

Metabelief IX.

Your Beliefs about your mental health are based upon social standards

Our beliefs clearly spell out standards on what is best for all of us to do and to strive for. These standards within our beliefs give to the rational mind, the limits and direction of normal, healthy thought,

feeling and behavior of the healthy person. To the degree that one deviates from the direction and limits given by our beliefs, that person is either a social degenerate or lacks mental health or is incompetent, and these deviations in behavior, thought and feeling are unhealthy, and unnatural.

Assume we are not in the ranks of unfortunate psychotics, but latent normals trying to improve things. Given that, we ask questions about what mental health is, because we assume that a definition of mental health will give us standards that tells us what we can do that is healthy as well as what we should avoid. Unfortunately, there is no simple definition of “**mental health**,” or even a useful one. We all assume we have mental health to some greater or lesser degree, but there is no objective evidence to justify this assumption. In short, the whole concept of mental health being absent or present within us is an untestable belief, and not a readily observable and verifiable phenomenon. The concept of mental health does have an environmental payoff as a guideline to socially acceptable behavior, which others in society would approve of. But there is no absolute standard by which we can tell if we are mentally ill or healthy.

When we try to discuss mental health, we slip and slide around the subject like a basket of eels, because everybody knows what it is we are talking about. Only none of us come right out and say what it is besides the absence of something we call mental illness. Even with mental illness, we are on very shaky ground, both scientifically and clinically.

Mental illness: The new name for social evil

To understand what you have to deal with in exploring this metabelief about your social beliefs, you can make a common sense observation on an operational definition of mental illness and mental health. To do this, you can look at the definition of the word illness. What illness really means — not to treatment professionals, but in the common language. While we use it as meaning sick, the earliest usage of the word ill gives us a place to start understanding its prime meaning, even to our present day. The word ill, as etymologists tell us, is a variation of the word evil, and was derived from it in our everlasting habit of shortening things for efficiency. You can easily recognize this original meaning in phrases we still use today, like ill wind, or ill will. So much for our sophist usage of the word illness, even by professionals. When we use the term mental

illness, we are still using it for its basic meaning of mental evilness.

When we all talk about mental health, we are only making a simple assumption that what we think of as poor mental health is reflected inside us in some lack of sound physical structure of the nervous system and brain, or even more deceptively, by some improper mix of biochemical states within our bodies. Aside from actual brain damage, which we rarely call mental illness, for it rarely produces behaviors we think of as being reflective of a "sick" mind, we have found no meaningfully significant physical evidence of altered shapes and structures of the brain to account for what we call mental illness in close to a century of research in neurophysiological anatomy and clinical pathology.

The idea of biochemical imbalances is also useless in explaining mental illness since we are biochemical organisms in everything we do. It gives us no useful operational definition of mental illness versus mental health. When we suffer anxiety, for example, we are assumed to have a biochemical imbalance. But when we get happy, jog and get tired, get depressed, or get angry with someone, we have a biochemical imbalance. Even our breathing in and out, the most natural thing we do without thinking about it, is to correct a moment-by-moment biochemical imbalance in our body. So to simplify the idea of mental illness to a chemical imbalance correctable by chemotherapy is to reduce it to the level of someone breathing in and out. While mental illness may be many things, it is not as simple as breathing in and out.

You can also make a common sense observation on contradictory cases with respect to use of the ideas of mental illness and mental health. With this observation you have the basis for making your own judgment on the probability of the ideas stated by the labels of mental health and illness being beliefs on how to behave in middle class society, or scientific, factual accounts of how people become "sick". You can observe yourself that the idea of mental health versus illness, has very little to do with absolute standards of behavior, because in one situation what we call mentally healthy is, in another time and place, a vile sickness. For the voyeur to observe sexual activity is a product of the sick mind, but for Masters and Johnson to do the same is scientific achievement. For the terminal cancer patient to suicide is rational, but for the depressed elderly person, who has lost all, to contemplate the same thing is mental illness.

The number of contradictory cases you can observe is endless. If we hear of a tragic happening where a person kills a dozen people with a rifle, we automatically assume the killer's mind was deranged. We find it

hard, because of the act's senselessness to us, in conceiving that the killer is anything else but mentally ill. But we do not take into account the fact that we routinely train young soldiers in the hope that they can do the same thing as the killer when we want them to. We train them without a thought of any notion of mental illness in their killing another human being. During WWII, one of the U.S. Army's biggest personnel problems was its conclusion that seventy percent of U.S. soldiers would not fire their rifles at another human unless he directly threatened them. They would fire at the ground, or over the heads of the enemy, or to the left or right, but not at another human. According to this indoctrinated metabelief, killing or not killing is linked to mental health according to the wishes of society in different circumstances. If we judge the young civilian who kills other people during peace time mentally ill, we must then also assume that the estimated seventy-percent of U.S. soldiers, whom you must remember during that war were mostly mature men and not kids, those who would not kill except in self-defense, would also have to be mentally ill not to kill for their country. These common sense, contradictory observations give you the basis for making your own judgment here; What is the probability that those who use the concepts of mental illness and mental health are people who believe mental health and middle class social value standards go hand in hand, versus what is the probability of mental illness and health being derived from scientific fact?

Mental health: The new name for social conformity

The use of the concept of mental health and mental illness for controlling one's behavior has been expanded and refined over the past thirty years. We have dropped the social evil label to describe many anti-social destructive behaviors, such as public disorderliness, spousal abuse, sexual molestation, exhibitionism, and chronic gambling, for example, and have reapplied a shiny new, "scientific" label of mental illness. We have also removed the label of mental illness from many socially non-conforming behaviors, which upset us in that very restricted environment thirty years ago. For example, anything you did thirty years ago which violated social mores or morals of our highly regulated and restricted, middle class environment, like nudity or casual sex, was officially labeled either criminal behavior or insanity, and legally prosecuted.

Since 1950, however, the perspectives on what is permissive, what is the cause of deviant behavior, and what we mean by individual freedom has been revised. We have changed to the point where we will no longer

permit our government to incarcerate someone just for being odd, or different, and offending others. Instead, we have updated things to where the same enforcement of social customs is attempted by replacing the police with the public mental health professional.

We have developed a very efficient mental health delivery system in this country over the past four decades. But by the term delivery, I do not mean the delivery of treatment to the person, but the delivery of the person to the mental health agency. You can make this observation yourself. Lie down on the sidewalk so you don't block it in any metropolitan area outside the skid row district. What I predict and know to happen, is not applicable to skid row for reasons we shall see in a moment. But if you do this in any other area where people are about, within fifteen minutes, twenty at the outside, a black and white police car will pull up to the curb to check you out. There are no laws written, as far as I can tell from legal counsel, forbidding you specifically to lie on the sidewalk. General ones on loitering, disturbing the peace, resisting arrest or assaulting an officer may be interpreted to prohibit you from doing this socially rare behavior. That legalese is still not pertinent to your behavior, and certainly is not the reason for the police showing up. If you refuse to talk to the police on why you are lying down, or even if you do, identifying yourself as a supine good citizen doing his or her thing, and if you keep insisting upon doing your own thing on the sidewalk, the result will be the same. Within two hours, you will be delivered either to the local mental health agency as a step prior to being delivered to the state mental hospital or directly to the mental hospital itself. You will not be taken to jail, for there is, effectively, no punishment in society today for either loitering or disturbing the peace, except for requiring you to seek help in straightening out your obvious "mental health" problem. If you behave this way, you clearly do not know the difference between social good and social evil, and you need someone expert to teach you this difference.

If you follow through with this behavior, resolute in the knowledge that you are harming no one, either others or yourself, when you reach the admitting department of the mental hospital you will have two choices. If you refuse to explain your behavior to the mental health professional, you will almost certainly be classified as gravely disabled for your practice of lying down on a public sidewalk and be committed for an indefinite period in some states, and for at least two weeks in most. If you explain that you just wanted to lie on the sidewalk, the professional will try to talk you into admitting yourself for an indefinite stay in the

mental hospital. The admitting professional knows that legally, he or she has no grounds for committing you on the basis that you decided to lie on the sidewalk contrary to social custom. If he or she did so, you would automatically be released as soon as you were brought before a judge to review your commitment. Moreover, the professional who signed the commitment papers would be rebuked and made an ass of in court.

But the mental health professional also knows that if released, and you intend to go back to the same sidewalk to lie down again when let go, you will be back with the police within a few hours. Then the police will be very angry with the mental health professional for letting you go because you will have demonstrated twice to their satisfaction that you are nuts and belong in a mental institution. You will never be either involuntarily committed or legally convicted for lying on the sidewalk. But you will be effectively prevented from violating social custom with all the legalese and mental health jargon society can muster.

You can also make the following common sense observation on contradictory cases. Why did I make the exception of skid row when I set up the conditions of testing the violation of social custom? Traditionally, it has been quite permissible to lie down on the sidewalk in skid row, but not in any place else in the metropolitan area. Lying down, as well as doing a lot of other questionable things is perfectly okay in the skid row area. Lots of people, such as derelicts, bums, and alcoholics do it regularly. The police will not pick you up for lying on the sidewalk in skid row, because, in reality, it is not a socially deviate act to lie on the sidewalk in skid row. The police know that when lots of people do things, they are powerless to have any effect whatsoever on that popular behavior, even ones of bums, derelicts and alcoholics. So the police will leave you alone lying on the sidewalk in skid row — unless you are wearing a neatly pressed Brooks Brothers suit and have a briefcase in your hand! If you then insist upon lying on the sidewalk, you will again be dragged off to the mental hospital, while the bums lying on either side of you will be left to snore in peace. It is perfectly normal and permitted for bums to lie on the sidewalk in skid row, because that is their social custom. It is not permitted for you dressed as a middle class person to lie on the sidewalk in skid row because that is not a middle class social custom, and the law and mental health professionals will effectively keep you from doing it. Even with the current social label of homeless people being applied to those who used to reside in skid row, but now can be seen almost everywhere in urban society, if you don't look homeless, you will still be

picked up and taken to the mental health clinic or hospital. It is okay for homeless people to lie down in the streets and parks, but not you with your middle class dress and appearance.

This seems a strange way of looking at the law and enforcing it. It is okay for some people to "break the law," but not for others. That does not sound like law, at least in the way we are all taught to understand it, but something else. What can be observed reliably has nothing to do with the law, but the enforcement of middle class social custom by the law, using the concepts of mental illness and mental health. These, and many other common sense observations on definitions and contradictions provide you the basis for you being your own judge. Especially on the probability of the usefulness to you of the concepts of mental illness and mental health, aside from prompting you to attend to social payoffs for "evil" and "good" behavior in your particular social class environment.

Observation X: Intelligence

To be useful your beliefs need not be based upon great Intelligence

Your beliefs do not need to be arrived at through high intellectual ability, but can be gotten through simple experience, including trial and error, or social indoctrination. If beliefs required great intellect as their basis, none of us would have them. Your beliefs only need be a schematic on how to do things in the particular restricted environment and time in which you now live.

This metabelief is a key one to recognize as just a belief if we wish to prevent psychological problems. It basically says that our beliefs have an intellectual basis, having already been thought out as the proper thing to do, and therefore are already as good as facts. Therefore, to tamper or fool with our beliefs is a dumb thing to do. If we insist on doing so, we need to have a very high intelligence quotient to match that of the very intelligent ancestors who formed our beliefs on how to live. We have been indoctrinated in this metabelief, which says approximately:

Metabelief X. Your beliefs are based upon intellect

Being the dominant thinking species in the universe, our beliefs did not come about randomly. The thinking, rational person knows our beliefs reflect very intelligent thought, and therefore are to be respected. Since our beliefs were developed by ancestors of very great

intellect, you need as great an intellect to modify or discontinue them.

This certainly is an intimidating metabelief. It requires you to be an intellectual in order to be a free person who can decide to believe or not believe, according to your own best interests. You can make your own common sense observations to assess the odds of this linkage between beliefs and high intellect being factual or only a justification for not changing any belief. If you wish, you can observe that few, if any, of our beliefs would stand up to a rigorous, intellectual attack on them, simply because they require no intellectual gift to acquire. If this assessment were not correct, none of us would have any beliefs, except for those few intellectuals who could elegantly and logically develop beliefs and then eloquently and logically defend them. Neither critical reasoning, nor intellect is sufficient or necessary to create or make a practical, empirical phenomenon, like our beliefs, work.

The reason our beliefs have nothing to do with critical intellectual reasoning is that we learn all our untestable beliefs about life, love, culture, caring and our human condition by trial and error, rote memorization, and social indoctrination. You can make common sense observations on contradictory cases where intellect has nothing to do with your beliefs. We start this process in childhood and it continues throughout our life. We learn our original beliefs and attitudes in the same rote manner as we learned our multiplication tables, the pledge of allegiance to the flag, and our polite manners; we memorized them from what other people told us. These things, like our beliefs, take no abstract thought to learn. We learned them by repeating them over and over again. Our beliefs about God, democracy, marriage, politics, work ethic and proper behavior are learned in an identical way throughout our entire life; indoctrination, rote memorization and personal trial and error. Our beliefs on social custom, mores, morals, and philosophy were learned in the same rote way.

Both the independence of our beliefs from intellect and their total dependence upon our environment, I'm sad to say, can be observed when the payoff environment becomes very restricted with an excess of negative payoffs. Our intellect and logical reasoning does little to protect us from beliefs which are generated by a very restricted environmental setting; one that does not have any relevance to the rest of the outside world we live in every day. Some of us — very intelligent, logical, highly educated people — operate within drastically restricted environments, full of mostly negatives, that are quite destructive, and our intellect is of little

help therein. This is like the example in Chapter Nine on retirement or achieving a long term goal wherein most of the positives in an environment are lost quite suddenly, producing profound depression. The beliefs we learn from such a narrow range of inputs gives us a view of things that is quite distorted from the outside world around us, but do have validity within that narrow environment lacking many positives. Unfortunately, too often we take the belief we gain from the narrow environment, which may be a quite negative one, and generalize it to our total possible payoff environment. You can make this common sense observation on contradictions yourself. The psychiatrist, for example, who only deals with the chronically depressed, psychotic or paranoid patient in his practice is likely to get depressed, and worse, to acquire a depressive attitude and belief about life that may prompt suicide. His nervous system is directly affected, day after day, in that dreadfully restricted environment by the morbid complaints of his depressed, or incapacitated patients, in spite of his intellectual strengths. In reality, if his entire professional life is made up of depressive and psychotic expectations, the greater part of his world would not be worth the powder to blow it to hell.

A belief that life is full of pain and sorrow and not worth living can be formed by the psychiatrist simply in verbalizing what his nervous system is already experiencing day by day — a biased payoff environment with overwhelming negatives and few positives. That destructive belief of the depressed psychiatrist is environmentally valid if his restricted practice makes up the great part of his total environment. If he does not expand his practice to include a fair proportion of troubled people with a good prognosis for improvement, his depressive belief becomes a chronic one that dominates his entire environment. Many shrinks, unfortunately, do not alter their specialization. Consequently, psychiatrists have the second highest suicide rates of any occupational group, right below dentists, who do practice in an exclusive environment of pain and fearful people. Both these groups illustrate how deadly a psychological problem can be if we believe instead of think. The only change necessary to deal with this deadly variation is to expand the payoff environment, i.e., by occasionally treating young children, even as a volunteer worker. Pediatricians have the lowest suicide rate of all demographic groups.

A variation of this metabelief that our beliefs all have an intellectual basis is that society would fall without the beneficial influence of our schools and universities making us all better people through schooling. The assumption behind this belief is that schools teach us intellectual

truths. Because of this assumption, teachers also add on the assumption that through schooling we will cure Mankind's long-standing problems and evils. This belief that everyone will benefit from schooling by becoming a better, more enlightened person who avoids evil is routinely contradicted by reality. You can make your own common sense observation with respect to this claim of what schooling does by asking yourself two questions. First, when was the last time your school required you to have an original thought? Second, who starts wars, and who designs and constructs modern mass weapons of death; some ignorant, unenlightened clod with little or no schooling carrying a club, or those highly schooled and "enlightened" people who rationally decide to use violent means to resolve conflict? The last U.S. president to send GIs off to get killed was a Rhodes scholar. Public and higher schooling only teaches us the particular, current culture and technology of the time we live in, nothing else. Much of that culture has no great intellectual basis since it is based totally upon the particular restricted social payoff environment in which we were reared and indoctrinated. Traditional schooling, you can observe, is not set up to teach us something new, but only that which is old and already accepted.

In Review

You and I have looked at ways you can use your critical thinking process by making common sense observations as a basis for being your own thinking judge of anything; any belief, any claim, any statement. In doing this, you have a basis for making a judgment of "Is what I'm dealing with more likely a fact or only what someone wants to believe? Even myself?" If you have the ability to make a rational judgment of something being more likely a fact than a belief, you also have the basis of prevention of future psychological problems. If you have the ability to determine yourself as more likely believing instead of thinking when your environment changes and what you know to be right doesn't work for you, you only need check out if you are operating upon an emotionally charged belief or not. If you are, and you can judge that you are, the psychological problem is resolved. That decision opens up an infinite variety of other ways to skin a cat than the way you believed you should, and gives you the freedom to change yourself, your values, your behavior, your outlook. In short, you Learn To Live With Dragons by thinking, not believing.

This decision leaves you with is a practical problem that may be very

uncomfortable and messy, but one that is solvable, and in a fairly short period of time — if you allow yourself to critically think of all your options when playing this nasty hand that life has dealt you.

This last chapter which concerns thinking versus believing, and the six preceding experiential ones which concern coping with emotional negatives, I expect, and hope, have provided you with the essential of a psychoeducation; the desensitization of you and your mid-brain to negative, conflicting, contradictory ideas, beliefs and claims — the stuff of problems that may or may not have a solution — Defanging The Dragon. The purpose of these chapters, of course, is to make you comfortable when things don't go the way Mom and Dad, and most of our teachers, told us they should. They do this by giving you the option on how to remain within the thinking mode of brain operation at the same time you experience negatives that make you wish you were an Olympian Champion Runner. That we experience such problems is not negative in and of itself. Without negatives, the mind is like the body musculature without exercise. For without problems and the negatives they reveal, we have no way of learning to develop to our full species potential, granted by our DNA; becoming a psychological adult. Someone who is not threatened or frightened by the potential consequences of serious and significant change. Someone who comfortably lives everyday with what Solomon is said to have told us thousands of years ago in Ecclesiastes: *To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heavens.*

Appendices

Appendix A.

Outlining the five developmental steps of a psychological problem.

The first part of a psychological problem:

A significant change in your environment

How long has it been since you have felt irritated, angry, resentful or upset about what has been bothering you. Let X be the time since then. Given that, what has changed significantly in your life in the last X (time span, i.e., weeks, months.)

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

The second part of a psychological problem:

A previously valid, but now malfunctioning belief

What is it that you are resentful, angry, irritated, upset about? What has happened that you believe shouldn't have happened? Why? (This is only a label on how you feel things should work, and are not working well now.)

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on the right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

The fourth part of a psychological problem:

Negatives about yourself newly revealed by the change in your environment.

What does the change in your life say about you personally that upsets you, makes you irritated, angry, or anxious? Use the logic of “If that really happened, and (she/he/they) did (said, thought, felt, etc.) that means I’m _____!” If you have difficulty filling out this section, return to the end of Chapter Four where Belief and Negative Inquiry is covered. Use that method also to generate personal negatives. Be generous in your interpretation of what your negatives are or might be. Give yourself the benefit of the doubt, so to speak. You can’t have too many negatives which to desensitize yourself. The more the better. If some false negatives are included, no harm done.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Appendix B.

Practice listing of anxiety producing personal and environmental negatives.

Given the information you have collected about your problem and yourself from Appendix A on environmental and personal negatives, fill in as many as needed of the blank critiques in this part. Use them to practice desensitizing yourself to their effect upon you, or as a reference list for your practice partner (a friend or relative) to critique you with, in as many desensitization exercises as you feel necessary to eliminate your negative emotional reaction to them. If you run out of printed space in the appendix, copy the Appendix B format on a lined pad by hand, or Xerox these pages beforehand.

Practice example:

Internal Critic: (nn) You are a real...

You: (Fogging or Negative Assertion) That's true. I don't like that about myself either

Internal Critic: (01)

You: (Fogging or Negative Assertion) _____ ?

Internal Critic: (02)

You: (Fogging or Negative Assertion) _____ ?

Internal Critic: (03)

You: (Fogging or Negative Assertion) _____ ?

Internal Critic: (04)

You: (Fogging or Negative Assertion) _____?

Internal Critic: (05)

You: (Fogging or Negative Assertion) _____?

Internal Critic: (06)

You: (Fogging or Negative Assertion) _____?

Internal Critic: (07)

You: (Fogging or Negative Assertion) _____?

Internal Critic: (08)

You: (Fogging or Negative Assertion) _____?

Internal Critic: (09)

You: (Fogging or Negative Assertion) _____?

Internal Critic: (10)

You: (Fogging or Negative Assertion) _____?

Internal Critic: (11)

You: (Fogging or Negative Assertion) _____?

Internal Critic: (12)

You: (Fogging or Negative Assertion) _____ ?

Internal Critic: (13)

You: (Fogging or Negative Assertion) _____ ?

Internal Critic: (14)

You: (Fogging or Negative Assertion) _____ ?

Internal Critic: (15)

You: (Fogging or Negative Assertion) _____ ?

Internal Critic: (16)

You: (Fogging or Negative Assertion) _____ ?

Internal Critic: (17)

You: (Fogging or Negative Assertion) _____ ?

Internal Critic: (18)

You: (Fogging or Negative Assertion) _____ ?

Internal Critic: (19)

You: (Fogging or Negative Assertion) _____ ?

Internal Critic: (20)

You: (Fogging or Negative Assertion) _____?

Internal Critic: (21)

You: (Fogging or Negative Assertion) _____?

Internal Critic: (22)

You: (Fogging or Negative Assertion) _____?

Internal Critic: (23)

You: (Fogging or Negative Assertion) _____?

Internal Critic: (23)

You: (Fogging or Negative Assertion) _____?

Internal Critic: (24)

You: (Fogging or Negative Assertion) _____?

Internal Critic: (25)

You: (Fogging or Negative Assertion) _____?

Internal Critic: (26)

You: (Fogging or Negative Assertion) _____?

Internal Critic: (27)

You: (Fogging or Negative Assertion) _____?

Internal Critic: (28)

You: (Fogging or Negative Assertion) _____?

Internal Critic: (29)

You: (Fogging or Negative Assertion) _____?

Internal Critic: (30)

You: (Fogging or Negative Assertion) _____?

Internal Critic: (31)

You: (Fogging or Negative Assertion) _____?

Internal Critic: (32)

You: (Fogging or Negative Assertion) _____?

Internal Critic: (33)

You: (Fogging or Negative Assertion) _____?

Internal Critic: (34)

You: (Fogging or Negative Assertion) _____?

Internal Critic: (35)

You: (Fogging or Negative Assertion) _____ ?

Internal Critic: (36)

You: (Fogging or Negative Assertion) _____ ?

Internal Critic: (37)

You: (Fogging or Negative Assertion) _____ ?

Internal Critic: (38)

You: (Fogging or Negative Assertion) _____ ?

Internal Critic: (39)

You: (Fogging or Negative Assertion) _____ ?

Internal Critic: (40)

You: (Fogging or Negative Assertion) _____ ?

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